

ABSTRACT

Enduring Endeavor: How Francis E. Clark Utilized Written Communication, Global Travel, and Organization to Re-Shape the Global Protestant Church's Ministry to Young People through the Christian Endeavor Society

This dissertation is a study of how Francis E. Clark utilized written communication, global travel and organization to re-shape the global Protestant church's ministry to young people through the Christian Endeavor Society. The Church of the late 19th century had a problem. It was losing young people to the expanding entertainments of society. While many of them had connected to a local church when they were young children through Sunday School, they had outgrown that educational ministry of the church. They also were not yet old enough to be a church member and thus could not be active contributors to the work of the church. With no real connection to the church or to Christ, and a growing number of things outside the Church vying for their attention young people were leaving.

Francis E. Clark, a young pastor in Portland, Maine had tried many different things to reach these young people, but all his attempts had failed. Then in February 1881, Clark started the first ever Young Person's Society for Christian Endeavor which would capture young people's attention and keep their focus through its focus on training. This one society of around sixty people would grow and multiply until it reached around the world with over five million members.

This study examines how Francis E. Clark utilized written communication, global travel and organization to re-shape the global Protestant Church's ministry to young

people through the Christian Endeavor society. By utilizing these three pieces, Clark would take a fledgling local church ministry with young people and transform it into a world-wide movement that would change the face of the Church.

Clark was a prolific writer and he utilized the new technologies of the day to maximize his audience. Clark helped to start the Christian Endeavor paper first called *The Golden Rule*, and later termed, *Christian Endeavor World*. In addition to being the first editor-in-chief, he contributed hundreds of articles and editorials over the years and grew the circulation of the paper into one of the most read Christian youth newspapers in the world. In addition Clark wrote many other articles, letters, and books that he called his “silent missionaries” that he could send all over the world in a moment’s notice all in the advocacy of Christian Endeavor and training young people in the church.

In addition, Clark was sometimes called “the most travelled person in the world” because of his many journeys all around the world for the purpose of supporting and encouraging Christian Endeavor. A believer in the capability of young people everywhere, Clark continued to promote Christian Endeavor in his world travels usually in support of the popular Christian Endeavor conventions.

Clark also used his abilities as an administrator and organizer to help Christian Endeavor grow into this worldwide enormous organization. By keeping the organization structure grounded in the local church and compact, Clark was able to keep the vision of Christian Endeavor in place while allowing for great flexibility at the local level. He continually innovated, adapted and challenged the society in ways that would assist in growth.

This dissertation makes several contributions to the areas of youth ministry, globalization and the Protestant church. First, it tells the story of Francis E. Clark. A biography has not been written about Clark in almost a century. His contributions to youth ministry as the church knows it today are unique and long-lasting. Second, it tells the story of the growth of Christian Endeavor under the leadership of Clark. While some books and papers have some sections about Christian Endeavor, none really address the cause of the growth of Christian Endeavor. Third, it identifies the values of Clark and Christian Endeavor – prizing, preparing, propelling, and promoting young people - that the church today can embrace in efforts to win young people again to Christ and the Church.

DISSERTATION APPROVAL SHEET

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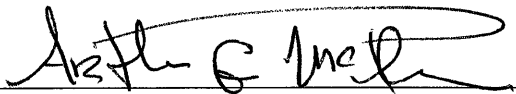
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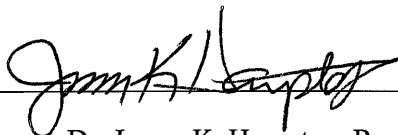
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Introduction

“It is practically impossible to write about Dr. Clark without also writing the history of Christian Endeavor itself, for Dr. Clark was a personification of Christian Endeavor.”¹

The air was humid and thick on the evening of July 13, 1896. The sun had gone down, but the meeting tent with more than 30,000 people held the day's heat. This was not the energy on the mind of Francis E. Clark, President of the United Society of Christian Endeavor and the World Christian Endeavor Union. His thoughts were on the energy of the continued progress of Christian Endeavor. In the final night of this convention, as he sat on the stage in Washington, D.C. surrounded by young people from all over the world, he remembered. He remembered yesterday's gathering of 75,000 people on the steps of the U.S. Capitol for a service of song and praise to God. He remembered the reports over the last few days from young people all over the world, telling of the growth of Christian Endeavor in each of the thirty-nine countries represented. He remembered the moving tales of persecution from the young man from Armenia who gladly joined the convention as a representative of Christ and the work of Christian Endeavor. He remembered the many meetings throughout the city, small and large, of denominations, local and state unions, junior societies and international delegations of Christian Endeavor. He remembered the responses he had personally seen in his travels of young people from all over the world for Christ and for the Church. He

¹ W. Knight Chaplin, *Francis E. Clark : Founder of the Christian Endeavor Society* (London: British Christian Endeavor Union, 1900).

remembered back to the first gathering of Christian Endeavor.²

How far away in space and time Portland, Maine fifteen years before must have seemed! From almost sixty young people in that first meeting to the over two-and-a-half million members globally part of forty-six thousand Christian Endeavor societies on this day, he remembered.

Clark certainly could have felt some personal pride as he remembered. He had been the founder of the movement and was the President. This was the fifteenth convention and the first World Convention. Christian Endeavor had seen continual growth in numbers from the start. However, Clark's focus was not on memorializing the growth or settling for the emotional high of this moment at the convention. Clark's focus was on the energy it would take to move the organization forward, to continue to help young people around the world connect to Christ and the church. His closing remarks at the convention capture his heartbeat:

So, Christian Endeavorers, he has been talking to us about peace, joy, and love, the sweet thought that surpasseth understanding, the love which is God's to give, the joy which has made our hearts swell in this, the most spiritual of all the conventions that the Christian Endeavor Society has perhaps ever held. And now there is something more. In this closing consecration meeting he comes to us with another voice. We go to our homes. Some of us leave in an hour's time, and the most of us leave to-morrow, and the message is, "Go, go, go, Christian Endeavorers; you have heard of peace, joy, and love, all of these things have come to you in the convention, and now go and preach my Gospel, and do my will." O Endeavorers, in this consecration hour, in this closing blessed service, as you look up and as you listen, will you hear? Will you obey? Will you go? Will you go and do his will? God grant it; God grant it. Go and do his will. God grant it.³

² *Fifteenth International Conference of the Young People's Society of Christian Endeavor: Held in Central Hall, Tent Williston, Tent Washington, Tent Endeavor, and the Churches, Washington, D.C., July 8-13, 1896* (Boston: United Society of Christian Endeavor, 1896).

³ *Fifteenth International Conference of the Young People's Society of Christian Endeavor: Held in Central Hall, Tent Williston, Tent Washington, Tent Endeavor, and the Churches, Washington, D.C., July 8-13, 1896* (Boston: United Society of Christian Endeavor, 1896), 329.

As Clark dismissed the crowd and closed the convention his hope was that Christian Endeavor would continue to grow and reach young people for Christ. This desire came not out of any inflated sense of self-importance or organizational superiority. This desire came out of the realization that the problem of young people not connecting to Christ and to the church was a problem the world over and was a problem that needed continual attention. Clark had to wonder if the people there would respond. Would they continue this progress? Would he continue to be the kind of leader this organization needed to expand in influence and in relationships? He also had to wonder, as we do now, what difference would all of this make?

What was it that Clark had figured out that would help so many young people connect to Christ and the church? Where did this innovation come from and what made it so successful that it would reach so many people around the world? Is there anything we can learn today from Clark and the Christian Endeavor Society? While the impact of the Christian Endeavor Society as developed by Francis E. Clark on ministry to youth across the world has been written about recently,⁴ the life of Francis E. Clark and the development of the society that led to such remarkable global impact has much to teach the missiological world today. For that reason it is important to study the life of Francis E. Clark and the development of Christian Endeavor. This dissertation will demonstrate how Francis E. Clark utilized written communication, global travel and organization to

⁴ Mark W. Cannister, "Youth Ministry's Historical Context: The Education and Evangelism of Young People," in *Starting Right: Thinking Theologically About Youth Ministry* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Youth Specialties/Zondervan Pub. House, 2001); Mark H. III Senter, *When God Shows Up: A History of Protestant Youth Ministry in America* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2010); Mark H. III Senter, "Horace Bushnell, Theodore Cuyler, and Francis Clark: A Study of How Youth Ministry Began," *Journal of Youth Ministry* 2, no. 2 (Spring 2004): 31–51; Mark W. Cannister, "Back to the Future: A Historical Perspective On Youth Ministry," *Christian Education Journal* 3, no. 2 (1999): 17–30.

re-shape the global Protestant church's ministry to young people through the Christian Endeavor Society.

The first part of the dissertation will discuss the formation of Christian Endeavor and the factors leading up to the innovation. Chapter one describes the formation and innovation of Christian Endeavor by Francis Clark. No problem or issue exists in a vacuum so chapters two and three respectively illustrate the social context of the day and the church context of that time. Chapter four digs deeper into the ministry to young people during the Gilded Age to provide a backdrop to the development of Christian Endeavor. Chapter five then deals with the influences directly on Clark and his innovation through his childhood, education and early ministry.

The second part of the dissertation dives more deeply into the main elements that led to Christian Endeavor's success and influence. Chapter six reveals the power of the pen in that context and Clark's genius in utilizing these "silent missionaries" in print to reach people all over the world. Chapter seven traverses the globe with Clark, describing his travels and the influence his presence made in the growth of Christian Endeavor. Chapter eight deals with the leadership of Clark and his adaptations as Christian Endeavor developed and grew.

The third and final part of the dissertation reveals my own view on the implications these discoveries have for the church and youth ministry today. Chapter nine discusses the differences in youth ministry today and Clark's vision of Christian Endeavor. Engaging Scriptural models of discipleship and current youth ministry theory, it also discusses the growing need for the church to prize, prepare, propel and promote young people today.

I have tried to use primary sources as much as I possibly could in gathering information about Francis Clark and Christian Endeavor. Clark wrote an enormous corpus throughout his life and I was able to draw on his writings and his speeches to support my claims here. In particular, Clark's autobiography, *Memories of Many Men in Many Lands*, was helpful. Written at the end of his life, Clark takes the time to recount his own perceptions of the people and places he journeyed in his life. It is invaluable in hearing Clark's heart and I used it as much as possible. Clark admits in the introduction of this book that he relied on his own memory and the memories of friends as much as any other source to tell the story. Therefore, I tried to corroborate his claims using other materials, especially quotes from Clark's journals that were written at the time of the development not retrospectively. The physical copies of Clark's journals seem to be lost and so when referring to those here, I mention the source(s) from which the quote came. *A Son's Portrait of Dr. Francis E. Clark*, is one such valuable resource. Clark's son, Eugene, took several years after his father's death to compile this book, referring to his father's journal, letters, and Christian Endeavor materials as main sources along with his own memories. Another notable biography is Chaplin W. Knight's *Francis E. Clark: Founder of the Christian Endeavor Society*, written in 1900 after Christian Endeavor had begun to grow. Clark's book, *Christian Endeavor in All Lands*, written to celebrate twenty-five years of the society is one of the best resources for the story of Christian Endeavor including its developments. Clark's articles in the Christian Endeavor paper, originally known as *The Golden Rule* and later *Christian Endeavor World*, provide a unique perspective on the pastoral and fatherly role Clark played in fostering the organization and its young people. The annual reports of the Christian Endeavor

conventions included the transcript of Clark's presidential speeches which often worked as a summary of that year's activities as well as vision for the next year. These prove helpful in getting yearly snapshots of the organizational issues and the growth of the organization. I also did my best to verify all facts listed by consulting a variety of supporting sources including time and place specific newspapers, denominational papers, and some other books of the day.

I began my work on Francis Clark as a research project on the history of youth ministry. Researching Christian Endeavor began to reveal both the influence of the movement and the importance of Francis Clark to the Protestant church's ministry to young people. A biography on Clark has not been written in almost eighty-five years and there seems to be a lot the church today can learn from Christian Endeavor and Francis Clark.

Through it all my hope is that the reader will be gain an appreciation for Francis Clark, an understanding of the scope and impact of Christian Endeavor and a renewed passion for the capability of young people in the church. As a youth ministry educator, I also desire that the things learned here will impact not only my own teaching, but the profession of youth ministry as a whole; that we would become more intentional in our valuing of young people, our desire to listen to youth, and our training of young people for ministry for Christ and the church. This dissertation demonstrates how Francis E. Clark utilized written communication, global travel and organization to re-shape the global protestant church's ministry to young people through the Christian Endeavor Society.

Part 1: Factors Leading to the Formation of Christian Endeavor

The story of the formation of the first Christian Endeavor Society is an interesting one, beginning in a pastor's house with about sixty young people on a cold February morning. As this part of the dissertation explains, this beginning, while striking in its simplicity, did not occur in a vacuum. Therefore, the social and church contexts of the United States during this time are explored in part one. Other various ministries to young people are examined and the many influences on Francis Clark are highlighted in order to understand where this society was birthed and the environment within which it thrived.

Chapter 1: Formation of Christian Endeavor

“Christian Endeavor at its best is a great educator because it inaugurates a leading-out process of the religious life of young people. It discovers a young person to himself as well as to others. It shows him that he has a tongue to be used in speaking of Jesus, and hands to be used in working for Him, and feet for running His errands, and, above all, a heart for loving Him supremely.”⁵

Portland, Maine in the 1870's was not a huge city with a population around 32,000, but was lively and supported many good New England families. After a terrible fire in 1866 that destroyed much of the town, Portland was rebuilding with wider, straighter streets and better buildings. The Boston and Maine Railroad was extended to

⁵ Chaplin, *Francis E. Clark : Founder of the Christian Endeavor Society*, 119–120.

Portland. George J. Varney, a Gazetteer (journalist) from the State of Maine, describes it,

Broad and regular streets, handsome and substantial business blocks, elegant and commodious dwellings, good drainage, well-lighted streets, pure water, excellent air, convenient conveyance in and out of the city, by horse and steam cars,-numerous shadetrees, unsurpassed views of sea and shore, good schools, well-attended churches, and a moral, industrious, enterprising and courteous people- these render Portland one of the most desirable of cities for a home and business.⁶

Church played a big part in the lives of the people with eighteen church buildings in town.

The Williston Church was born in 1873 out of a Sunday School started by the State Street Church and rapidly grew in numbers, finances and spirituality.⁷ Their first pastor, Rev. Burke F. Leavitt, led them for three years before resigning to take a church in Massachusetts. In 1876 the young, growing church looked for a pastor to help lead them. Francis Edward Clark a newly married, freshly seminary graduated, Congregationalist fit the bill. As Clark describes the opportunity for he and his new wife, “We were about the same age, each within sight of twenty-five, and though we had but a few dollars to bless ourselves with, there was a salary of \$1,800 a year waiting for the new pastor of Williston Church as soon as he should assume his duties, which he did a fortnight after his wedding.”⁸

The Williston Church did not on the surface appear to be one of great potential. Clark’s son recorded later, “The church at this time was poor in worldly goods, not strong in membership, but rich in future prospects. It was in the new and rapidly developing

⁶ George J. Varney, “History of Portland, Maine,” *Ray’s Place History of Maine*, 1886, <http://history.rays-place.com/me/portland-me.htm>.

⁷ Francis E. Clark, *Christian Endeavor in All Lands* (Philadelphia: n.p., 1906), 32.

⁸ Chaplin, *Francis E. Clark : Founder of the Christian Endeavor Society*, 151.

section of the city near the Western Promenade, and, while most of the members were of modest circumstances, there were a few men of wealth who were devoted to the interests of the church.”⁹ The church in Portland was small in both the size of the building and numbers of attendees.

The young pastor went right to work and the community responded. Clark took over the Williston chapel at the age of twenty-six and the membership grew from fifty to four hundred in two years. The growth led to the construction of a larger church building which was first occupied in September, 1878.¹⁰ “It is evident that the pulpit work of the young preacher pleased his audiences, as many of the sermons were printed by request in the Portland papers, and the preacher was in frequent demand in exchange, or for union services.”¹¹ The congregation was made up largely of people under forty years old who appreciated their young pastor, his good communication and his organized administrative abilities.

Clark was a good preacher and leader, but his heart lay with reaching the youth. When Clark was a young boy he had seen his brother demonstrate the capability of young people to be mature, Christian leaders. He believed that all young people could and should achieve this Christian spiritual maturity. “From the beginning of his pastorate the young minister had tried in every way to attract young people to the Church. He remembered the brother whose beautiful life and death had influenced his boyhood, and

⁹ Eugene Francis Clark and Sydney Clark, *A Son's Portrait of Dr. Francis E. Clark*. (Boston: Williston Press, 1930), 72.

¹⁰ Chaplin, *Francis E. Clark: Founder of the Christian Endeavor Society*, 19–20.

¹¹ Clark and Clark, *A Son's Portrait of Dr. Francis E. Clark*, 74–75.

believed with all his heart in the possibilities of consecrated youth.”¹² Clark, wanting desperately to reach the young people of his community, worked to understand what was happening to keep young people from the church.

The Problem

The young people of Portland had been exposed to the church and Sunday School, but as was typical of most places in the United States, were being drawn to other newer entertainments. There was a good school in town, quite a few families with children, and a growing commitment to Christ and the church; Williston Church’s growth was a part of this. The young people were going to church, but there was an overall lack of connectedness with this group in the church. Like most great movements, the impetus for starting the Christian Endeavor Society was a simple problem: young people were outgrowing Sunday School before they were old enough to join and participate fully in the church. The result was that many young people were becoming marginal in their faith and church participation, or worse yet, leaving the church altogether.¹³

Society was changing with the growing options in entertainment and an increased expectation for schooling for young people. The main method that had been such a great evangelistic and discipleship tool in the past for this age group, Sunday School, was losing its influence on these older youth. David Macleod focuses on the culture impact and changes on young people during this Gilded Age, “By puberty or soon after, most

¹² Chaplin, *Francis E. Clark : Founder of the Christian Endeavor Society*, 21.

¹³ Clark, *Christian Endeavor in All Lands*, 25.

boys quit Sunday school.”¹⁴

The problems were more than just Sunday School. Society in America was “growing up” a bit itself. Distractions that once were not even in existence were now serious competition for the church and growing daily. Where the church had been quite spirited and a form of entertainment in its own right, culture was catching up and surpassing the church. As Mark Senter concisely describes:

The “youth problem” extended beyond youth ceasing to attend church. Economic prosperity made alternative forms of activities far more appealing to youth than church services, which appealed primarily to the cognitive powers of listeners. Alternatives abounded - roller skating, bicycle rides, picnics, socials, theater attendance, watching spectator events such as baseball, visiting amusement parks, even visiting a neighborhood saloon or its temperance alternative, the newly invented soda fountain. Not only was the church losing her youth, they had begun “worshiping” elsewhere.”¹⁵

The other “problem” was an extension of mandated public schooling in the United States through the invention of the High School. These young people were in a position where they were no longer comfortable in the church and there were things outside of the church competing for their time and attention. Clark felt that young people and their parents were too concerned with school work and thus neglecting their study of Scripture, attention to prayer, and time together discussing the Christian life. Clark bemoans the “tyranny of the public school” on children and families and the way it was taking children away from the Bible and church.¹⁶

¹⁴ David I Macleod, *The Age of the Child: Children in America, 1890-1920* (New York: Twayne, 1998), 146. While Macleod puts the dates on the Gilded age as starting 1890, he recognizes the decline in young people attending Sunday School can be seen even sooner.

¹⁵ Mark H. III Senter, *When God Shows Up: A History of Protestant Youth Ministry in America* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2010), 155.

¹⁶ Francis E. Clark, *Training the Church of the Future; Auburn Seminary Lectures on Christian Nurture with Special Reference to the Young People's Society of Christian Endeavor as a Training-school of the Church*, (New York and London: Funk & Wagnall, 1902), 26–27.

Not surprisingly, Portland, Maine, the Williston Church, and Clark were hardly alone in dealing with this problem. In referring to discussions about young people from his region, Clark records, “At a meeting of ministers held in Boston shortly before the Endeavor Society was begun, the perennial subject was discussed, ‘How can we win our young people to Christ?’”¹⁷ The issue extended beyond the region to the whole of the country. “Virtually every Protestant denomination recorded efforts in local churches to address the ‘youth problem’ as they saw it.”¹⁸

For Clark the issue was amplified by the attitude of the church towards these young people. “Now, what are some of the outward obstacles in the way of the conversion of children and the virtue of child Christians? All these obstacles may be grouped under two heads, opposition and indifference, the opposition and indifference of parents and teachers and churches.”¹⁹ For him, the church’s responsibility was to address this problem and he saw it as one of the major issues of the day. “The welfare of the church of God depends more upon the attention that is given to this problem and its right solution, during the next generation, than upon any other question. It ought to be the expected, well-understood thing that the children of church members should themselves become church members before they leave the parental roof.”²⁰ Clark actively advocated for the church to make adjustments in its approach.

¹⁷ Francis E. Clark, *World Wide Endeavor: the Story of the Young People’s Society of Christian Endeavor, from the Beginning and in All Lands* (Philadelphia: Gillespie, 1895), 44.

¹⁸ Senter, *When God Shows Up: A History of Protestant Youth Ministry in America*, 155.

¹⁹ Francis E. Clark, *The Children and the Church, and the Young People’s Society of Christian Endeavor, as a Means of Bringing Them Together*. (Boston: Congregational Sunday school and Pub. society, 1882), 28.

²⁰ Clark, *Christian Endeavor in All Lands*, 22.

To address the problem, Clark and his wife, Harriett, tried several different ways of connecting the young people of the community into the life of the church, but had very limited and often short-lived success. In his own words,

With the very best intentions, but often with very indifferent results, everything possible was done to interest and attract the boys and girls. Reading-rooms were sometimes furnished, debating-societies started, musical clubs organized; teas and suppers and picnics were the order of the day in many churches. It became a standing and threadbare pleasantry that there were two seasons of the year when the Sunday-school would be sure to be full, just before Christmas, and again just before the midsummer picnic.²¹

Clark and his church were focused on what they could do *for* the young people and how it could win them for Christ, rather than on how it could get them to *serve* Christ and the church. He and his wife attempted many different programs, some of which might have drawn a crowd for a short time, but none were successful in “training up a company of devoted, earnest young people, outspoken among their companions in their acknowledgment of Christ’s claim and ready to work for Him along all practical and systematic lines.”²² But Clark would not give up. He recorded in his journal,

However, the failure of lawn-tennis, of pink teas, and Christmas trees, and summer picnics to strengthen the church and develop the religious life of the young people soon made themselves self-evident; and these many and varied failures were not the least important means of preparing the Christian world for an organization which should plant itself firmly and unequivocally on the basis of service for others for Christ’s sake.²³

To add to the problem there was a gap between the older people of the church and the young. Clark notes, “The young Christians, naturally diffident in the presence of their elders, took little or no part in the prayer meetings of the church, when there were others

²¹ Ibid., 27.

²² Clark and Clark, *A Son’s Portrait of Dr. Francis E. Clark.*, 78.

²³ Clark, *Christian Endeavor in All Lands*, 29.

who could speak and pray so much more fluently, nor were they prominent in its social and benevolent activities, when overshadowed by others of more experience.”²⁴ Of particular concern to Clark was the lack of participation by young people. The pastor was well aware that if the young people of his church did not learn how to participate and contribute now, when they were young, that they certainly would not participate as adults. “The great task which confronted Williston Church, as it has confronted so many others, was how to give these young converts duties and responsibilities, suited to their powers, that would train and develop them for larger duties and responsibilities.”²⁵

The main method that had been such a great evangelistic and discipleship tool in the past for this age group, Sunday School, was losing its influence on these older youth. Sunday Schools of the day would focus on training children up through the age of 13, when they would typically have finished school. Thus there was a gap between when most churches would accept people to membership at age 18 and finishing of Sunday School.²⁶ Even where efforts were made for Sunday School to extend to older children, they were not interested. “Young people in the era before public high schools, typically engaged in business by age fifteen. To them Sunday School seemed childish.”²⁷ The church was not serving or challenging these young people.

There were not any opportunities for these young people to really live out their

²⁴ Francis E. Clark, *Memories of Many Men in Many Lands : an Autobiography* (Boston; Chicago: United Society of Christian Endeavor, 1923), 78.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ John Springhall, “Building Character in the British Boy: The Attempt to Extend Christian Manliness to Working-Class Adolescents, 1880-1914.,” ed. J. A. Mangan and James Walvin, *Manliness and Morality : Middle-class Masculinity in Britain and America, 1800-1940* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1987), 55.

²⁷ Senter, *When God Shows Up: A History of Protestant Youth Ministry in America*, 155.

faith and participate in the church. “But still there was not in that Church, nor was there in any other church at that time, a sufficient opportunity for young people to express their devotion, or to utilise their enthusiastic love and bounding aspirations in their service of Christ. It was the rarest thing in the world to hear a young voice in the weekly prayer-meeting of the Church, and the very rarity of such an occurrence placed a seal on the lips of most young people.”²⁸ The desperation for Clark and others was important and real. Clark states the problem: “How to change this state of affairs; how to provide some natural outlet for these young energies; how to furnish appropriate work which should not be merely playing at work but actually accomplishing something for Christ and the Church, was the great problem of the hour.”²⁹ As his son records,

The church was made up largely of young people, and from the first the minister’s appeal and his own interest seemed to be especially with the young people. After three years of work in the church the problem of how to reach the boys and girls and their older brothers and sisters was still unsolved.”³⁰

The churches of that time saw the writing on the wall. They recognized that losing young people now would lead to bigger problems later. Many pastors were expressing their concern about young people. “By articulating their concern about the salvation of young people in this way, the Boston pastors showed their fears about young people were linked to a larger fear about the future of the church.”³¹ Clark and others were desperate to

²⁸ Clark, *World Wide Endeavor : the Story of the Young People’s Society of Christian Endeavor, from the Beginning and in All Lands*, 54–55; Chaplin, *Francis E. Clark : Founder of the Christian Endeavor Society*, 26.

²⁹ Clark, *World Wide Endeavor : the Story of the Young People’s Society of Christian Endeavor, from the Beginning and in All Lands*, 55.

³⁰ Clark and Clark, *A Son’s Portrait of Dr. Francis E. Clark*, 28.

³¹ Christopher Lee Coble, “Where Have All the Young People Gone?: The Christian Endeavor Movement and the Training of Protestant Youth, 1881-1918 : a Thesis,” 2001, 17.

reach these young people.

Clark continued to be frustrated with his attempts, but did not give up in trying to connect these young people to Christ, ministry and the church. Reflecting his frustrations and continued innovations he wrote to his father in the fall of 1879 : “Tonight a new prayer meeting is started which we shall hold through the winter. It is especially for the young people, and I want to make it very informal and familiar where we shall sit around, talk, ask questions, etc. It is something of an experiment, but I hope it will succeed, for there are many young people whom we can’t quite seem to reach by the existing meetings.”³² Clark began to think about ways that the young people themselves, apart from their parents, could prove their engagement and seriousness in faith. He decided to have the church focus on a week of prayer.

As a result of this Week of Prayer, in January 1881, supplemented by the Sunday-school prayer-meetings and the pastor’s class, and the influence of the Mizpah Circle under the direction of the pastor’s wife, many young hearts were given to the Lord Jesus Christ; a new song was put into their mouths, and their eager impulse was, as is always the impulse of new converts, to do something for Him whom they had begun to love. After the Week of Prayer was over, special meetings were held, and in all some twenty or thirty young converts were born into the Kingdom of God.³³

Clark was not going to let this group fade away. Out of these prayer meetings there was a significant revival among the young people. In his Presidential Address at the 6th Christian Endeavor convention, W.J. Van Patten described it, “In the winter of 1880-81, a series of Sabbath-school prayer meetings resulted in the conversion of a considerable number of the children. Then came to the pastor the problem which has perplexed so many pastors - How can these children be best trained for active Christian

³² Clark and Clark, *A Son’s Portrait of Dr. Francis E. Clark.*, 28.

³³ Chaplin, *Francis E. Clark : Founder of the Christian Endeavor Society*, 24.

lives; their growth in faith, in works, in character, made sure by right Christian nurture?"³⁴ Coming out of that period of renewed interest in Christ and the church, Clark realized the problem within his own church and feared for the long-term commitments of his young people.

These meetings seem to give some glimmers of hope for the young people, but a larger problem was revealed: lack of parental support. Clark wrote in his journal six months later,

There is no reason in my judgment why thirty or forty of them (young people) should not come into the church the first of May, but I find an unaccountable indifference and reluctance on the part of the parents to their joining the church and I am afraid I shall receive but few of them. Their parents acknowledge that they are different from what they were, and they think they are converted, but will not encourage, or even allow them, in some cases, to go any further. It is very disheartening to find them so, and I am almost indignant sometimes.³⁵

One of the key issues in this matter was church membership. The young people felt like they were ready to be active members of the church and able contributors. The older members of the church doubted this was the case. The standard age of church membership was seventeen or eighteen. Many of these young people were younger than that.

Innovation

After being frustrated with his own attempts and the attempts of other churches to attract young people, Clark says of himself,

...but his mind was gradually working out the problem, and from the very failure of these poor makeshifts at Christian nurture he came to see that there must be

³⁴ *Sixth Annual Conference of the Young People's Society of Christian Endeavor: Held at Saratoga Springs, N.Y., July 5, 6, and 7, 1887, with Papers at the Conference* (Boston, MA: The United Society of Christian Endeavor, 1887), 38.

³⁵ Clark and Clark, *A Son's Portrait of Dr. Francis E. Clark.*, 79.

something more earnest and strenuous, something that demanded service for the church, and not simply a condescending willingness to be pleased and entertained by the church. In fact, he came to see that the order of our Lord's life-motto could not be reversed, but that those who should be won for the Christian life must *minister*, and not merely be ministered unto.³⁶

In February 1881, after five years of serving the church and many attempts at connecting the young people to the church, Clark went home after morning worship services on a Sunday afternoon, entered his third story study and drafted a constitution to form a new Young Person's Society of Christian Endeavor that called for weekly commitment and service from all the membership. His wife, Harriett, was downstairs baking cookies for the group to enjoy that evening. When he showed her the document she doubted whether or not the serious commitment would be accepted by the young people. The two were so engrossed in the conversation that they completely forgot the cookies in the oven until that batch was well burnt! In the end Clark decided to at least give it a try.

It was a bitterly cold day, with snow covering the ground and icicles hanging from the eaves, but still around sixty young people showed up that night. The first forty younger people came in the late afternoon for the Mizpah Circle (a missions education program run by Mrs. Clark) and tea, after which they were joined by their older brothers and sisters.

After a little general conversation as to the importance of starting right, or working for the Church, and of showing one's colours for Christ on all occasions, Dr. Clark with, as later admitted, 'a good deal of hesitation,' produced a constitution, the germs of which had lain in his mind for a long while, but which he had written out for the first time that day. It proposed that the society should be called the "Williston Young People's Society of Christian Endeavour." Its object was declared to be "to promote the earnest Christian life among its members, to increase their mutual acquaintance, and to make them more useful in the service of God."³⁷

³⁶ Clark, *Christian Endeavor in All Lands*, 28.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 35–36.

There would be specific membership in the society with officers and three committees: the prayer meeting committee, the social committee and the lookout committee. The expectation for the prayer meeting was that every member attend each meeting and “that each one will take some part however slight in the meeting.”³⁸ While adults would still be present and supporting, the ministry of the society would fall on the young people. The group did not expect this. They had never even heard of anything like this. When Clark finished reading a deathly silence fell.

... a considerable and painful silence fell upon the meeting when this constitution with its serious provisions was proposed. It seemed as if the society would die still-born, and be simply a creature of the pastor’s imagination. But God ordered it otherwise. In that company were two who were especially influential and helpful in launching the little craft. These were Mr. W.H. Pennell, before mentioned, and the pastor’s wife. Seeing that the matter was likely to fall through, at least for that meeting, Mr. Pennell affixed his signature to the constitution, and called upon his class of young men to do the same. Mrs. Clark quietly circulated among the girls of the Mitzpah Circle, persuading them that it was not such a ‘dreadful’ promise to make as they at first supposed, telling them that any earnest young person could live up to the provisions of this constitution, and promising herself to be an active member, though at first she shrunk from the pledge as any of them.

One by one the young men and women affixed their names to the document, a few more minutes were spent in conversation, a closing prayer was offered and a hymn sung, and the young people went out into the frosty night to their homes, with many a merry “Good-night,” “Good night,” to each other; and the first society of Christian Endeavor was formed.³⁹

The young people had all signed the covenant. But Clark had to be wondering if this would really work or if it would be another failed attempt in the growing list. Would this society move the young people of his church to action? Would this help young people grow in their faith? Would this empower them to become active in building the

³⁸ Clark, *Memories of Many Men in Many Lands : an Autobiography*, 85.

³⁹ Clark, *Christian Endeavor in All Lands*, 39–41.

Church?

Chapter 2: Social Context

“When seen from the vantage point of the early 21st century, there is no doubt that the two generations between the late 1860s and the beginning of WWI remain the greatest technical watershed in human history.”⁴⁰

In order to best understand the reaction to this first covenant it is helpful to take a step back and examine what else was going on in the culture of the day. Like most great movements, the impetus for starting the Christian Endeavor Society was a simple problem: young people were outgrowing Sunday School before they were old enough to join and participate fully in the church. As stated above, this in-between time was also one where many young people were being tempted with the growing entertainments of society. The result was that many young people were becoming marginal in their faith and church participation, or worse yet, leaving the church altogether. This problem was widespread and many a pastor and church were actively seeking ways to address the problem.

Change. In one word this best describes the culture of the United States from 1850-1910. Everything changed; from the way that people lived their lives, to the work they did, to the tools they used, to the methods in place, to the location of the activities, to the way they learned, to the way they viewed right and wrong. This period introduced massive, radical and wide-sweeping change. Those living through this era saw changes in technology and science that changed the way they, and future generations, would live.

⁴⁰ Vaclav Smil, *Creating the Twentieth Century : Technical Innovations of 1867-1914 and Their Lasting Impact* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 13.

Society became much more organized as businesses and communities learned to leverage their resources efficiently. People moved from a rural, agricultural setting, to the new urban centers of industry. Education changed as well, engaging more of the population with a child-centered approach that would hopefully lead them to college. Moral issues were challenged and changed as well, as a nation prohibited alcohol and learned to drink again, accept immigrants and freed slaves. At the heart of this change was an attitude that chose to look to the future, rather than just to be defined by the past.

As Maury Klein records in *The Flowering of the Third America: The Making of an Organizational Society, 1850-1920*, the American industrial experience in the period included the following factors and changes:

1. Power-driven machinery replaced human and animal muscle as a source of energy.
2. Technological innovations penetrated every area of economic activity and greatly increased productivity.
3. Production came to be centered in factories or other centrally located facilities.
4. A transportation revolution sped the flow of goods and people.
5. A communications revolution sped the flow of information.
6. A full-blown market economy extended its reach beyond the local level to regional and national levels.
7. An organizational revolution restructured American Business enterprise and ultimately the whole society.
8. Specialization began to characterize every aspect of economic activity.
9. Population increased at unprecedented rates.

10. The number of cities and towns, and the proportion of Americans living in them, increased sharply.⁴¹

This is not to say that change was always smooth or easy. In fact the radical and deep levels of change led to many struggles: between the rural and urban cultures; between new acceptable morals and old; between established methods and newly developed organizations. As Robert S. Lynd and Helen Merrell Lynd wrote in their 1929 sociological study of a “typical” American town, *Middletown: A Study in American Culture*, “...the fact remains that Middletown’s life exhibits at almost every point either some change or some stress arising from failure to change. A citizen has one foot on the relatively solid ground of established institutional habits and the other fast to an escalator erratically moving in several directions at a bewildering variety of speeds.”⁴² Change and its effects were the norm for the time, upsetting some, pushing aside others, but ultimately moving rapidly forward towards the future.

Technical and Scientific Developments

Change is always happening. Civilization advances. But as Maury Klein writes, “This portrait of the United States in 1850 is a still life of a preindustrial society on the brink of becoming an industrial one... The structure of every aspect of society, and the details of everyday life, changed more in those seventy years than in all the centuries of recorded history before them.”⁴³ The culture was changing and the atmosphere was hopeful. “The nation was optimistic. Despite occasional recessions the American

⁴¹ Maury Klein, *The Flowering of the Third America : the Making of an Organizational Society, 1850-1920* (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 1993), 13–14.

⁴² Robert Staughton Lynd and Helen Merrell Lynd, *Middletown, a Study in Contemporary American Culture*, (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1929), 498.

economy grew at an amazing rate, and the United States became the world's foremost producer of manufactured goods. Railroads stretched from coast to coast carrying products over nearly a quarter of a million miles of track by 1910. Technical innovation, as evidenced by new patents, propelled the economy forward.”⁴⁴ This is massive change in such a wide-spread way that its impact is felt even to this day.

It is hard to over emphasize the technical and scientific developments and their impact during this time period. In the early 1850's most people in the United States lived life in ways quite similar to the early pioneers. The changes in culture and technology were small. But take for instance the case of Middletown, “...in 1885, before gas and wealth spouted from the earth, bringing in their wake a helter-skelter industrial development, Middletown, a placid county-seat of some 6,000 souls, still retained some of the simplicity of the early pioneer life.”⁴⁵ This period of little change would not last.

The changes that occurred during this period began quickly and continued to develop rapidly throughout the period. Vaclav Smil, in his excellent book *Creating the Twentieth Century: Technical Innovations of 1867-1914 and Their Lasting Impact*, compares this period of innovations with those before and after it, “*the impact of the late 19th and early 20th century advances were almost instantaneous*, as their commercial adoption and widespread diffusion were very rapid.”⁴⁶ The speed of the transformation was incredible and was in large part due to the technical innovations. “Converting a rural,

⁴³ Klein, *The Flowering of the Third America : the Making of an Organizational Society, 1850-1920*, 9–10.

⁴⁴ Senter, *When God Shows Up: A History of Protestant Youth Ministry in America*, 153.

⁴⁵ Lynd and Lynd, *Middletown, a Study in Contemporary American Culture*, 12.

⁴⁶ Smil, *Creating the Twentieth Century : Technical Innovations of 1867-1914 and Their Lasting Impact*, 8.

agrarian society to an urban, industrial one changed the lives of people in more basic ways than in any other period. Later eras may have introduced change more rapidly, but their *degree* of change cannot compare with the first entrance into the industrial age.”⁴⁷ It was not just the original advances that were happening quickly, it was the adaption of them as well. Smil again on another remarkable attribute of this era, “...is *the rate with which all kinds of innovations were promptly improved after their introduction* - made more efficient, more convenient to use, less expensive, and hence available on truly mass scales.”⁴⁸ New advances were being made in science and technology and they were being adapted almost as quickly as they were invented. This led to improvements in efficiency as well as making the products more affordable and marketable to the general public for consumption and adoption.

The speed and quality of these advances cannot be overlooked. Smil:

Many pre-WWI innovations were patented, commercialized, and ready to be diffused in just a matter of months (telephone, lightbulbs) or a few years (gasoline-fueled cars, synthesis of ammonia) after their conceptualization or experimental demonstration. And as they were built on fundamental scientific principles, it is not only their basic operating modes that have remained intact but also many specific features of their pioneering designs are still very much recognizable among their most modern upgrades.⁴⁹

It is important to note that these technical innovations were integral to the changes in the broader culture as well.

In case after case the preceding pages have revealed Middletown as learning new ways of behaving towards material things more rapidly than new habits addressed to persons and non-material institutions. New tools and inventions have been the

⁴⁷ Ibid., 171–172.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 11.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 9.

most prolific breeders of change... By and large, a new tool or material device, the specific efficacy of which can be tested decisively and impersonally, is fairly certain to be fitted somehow into Middletown's accepted scheme of things, while opposed non-material factors, such as tradition and sentiment, slowly open up to make room for it.⁵⁰

This was change that lasted and indeed continues to shape our culture and civilization today.

What were these innovations and advances? What are the kinds of things that were developed during this time period?

Table 1: Development during the Gilded Age

- the first practical designs of dynamos and open-hearth steel-making furnaces
- the first patenting of sulfite pulping process
- introduction of dynamite
- the United States became the world's largest economy surpassing all others in gross domestic product
- the formulation of the second law of thermodynamics
- successful commercialization of Haber-Bosch ammonia synthesis (which was particularly revolutionary in the area of developing the soil for more productive farming)
- introduction of the first continuously moving assembly line at the Ford Company
- Irving Langmuir's patenting of coiled tungsten filament (still used in the light bulb)
- telephones
- sound recordings
- practical typewriters
- chemical pulp
- reinforced concrete

⁵⁰ Lynd and Lynd, *Middletown, a Study in Contemporary American Culture*, 499.

- electricity-generating plants
- electric motors and trains
- transformers
- steam turbines
- gramophone
- popular photography
- practical gasoline-fueled four stroke internal combustion engines
- motorcycles
- automobiles
- aluminum productions
- crude oil tankers
- air-filled rubber tires
- first steel skeleton skyscrapers
- pre-stressed concrete
- diesel engines
- x-rays
- movies
- liquefaction of air
- wireless telegraph
- discovery of radioactivity
- synthesis of aspirin
- first airplanes
- radio broadcasts
- vacuum diodes and triodes
- stainless steel
- hydrogenation of fats

- air conditioning⁵¹

Before 1850, none of these innovations were present, by the beginning of World War I all of these were actively in use in American society.

Klein points out the importance of these technical developments among the other many changes, “Here, then, were the ingredients of the new American landscape: many more people than ever before from a vastly more diverse mix of cultures, thrown together in closer proximity to perform a much more complex variety of jobs in cities and towns that were themselves growing and changing at a rapid pace. The new industrial city had become for many the engine of progress, and technology was the fuel that made it go.”⁵² The developments of this period were truly revolutionary. The last word goes again to Smil on the uniqueness of this period, “...but the historical evidence forces me to conclude that the Age of Synergy was a profound technical singularity, a distinct discontinuity...”⁵³ (Smil 25) Here it can be seen that these innovation were pointing forward into the future.

Organization

One of the new realities with all of this technical and scientific innovation was the need for a way to organize labor into ways that would maximize efficiency and lower costs. This led to an organizational revolution to go along with the rising technical one.

⁵¹ Smil, *Creating the Twentieth Century : Technical Innovations of 1867-1914 and Their Lasting Impact*; Lynd and Lynd, *Middletown, a Study in Contemporary American Culture*,.

⁵² Klein, *The Flowering of the Third America : the Making of an Organizational Society, 1850-1920*, 132.

“...between 1850 and 1920, however, an organizational revolution revamped the basic structure of American civilization in ways that affected every aspect of people’s lives. In that short time a society of individuals was transformed into a society of organizations.”⁵⁴ Groups of people, from simple societies to large businesses, were discovering the power of organizing their efforts, resources and people.

This movement from individual to organization came as America began to see the success and power of organizations within companies. Andrew Carnegie, one of the period’s most successful businessmen through his ability to cheaply produce steel, said, “Take from me all the ore mines, railroads, manufacturing plants and leave me my organization, and in a few years I promise to duplicate the Carnegie Company.”⁵⁵ The leaders of the era understood that power comes in the ability to organize the labor.

With this movement towards the power of organizations, came a shift from the narrow, individualistic mindset, to a group mindset that embraced belonging to a larger company or organization to accomplish more. “The trend was obvious: economic opportunity in the industrial society lay less in going one’s own way than in finding a place within the existing scheme of things.”⁵⁶ This was one of the major shifts in the culture of the time: from the individual to the organization; but always with an eye to maximizing the future. A simple look to the past shows that this mindset was not in the vocabulary of the American pioneer.

⁵³ Smil, *Creating the Twentieth Century : Technical Innovations of 1867-1914 and Their Lasting Impact*, 25.

⁵⁴ Klein, *The Flowering of the Third America : the Making of an Organizational Society, 1850-1920*, 42-43.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 42.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 108.

The change in cultural mindset was lived out in the culture at large as well. “The organizational revolution brought into being a mass of new jobs within corporate and other bureaucratic structures. The new employees, who became known as ‘white collar’ workers to distinguish them from ‘blue collar’ factory workers, emerged as the backbone of a new middle class that became the fastest growing group in the nation.”⁵⁷ This new mindset was met with new methods of organizing and working within those organizations.

Rural to Urban

Not to be missed here is the need in both the technical and scientific innovations and the organizational innovations for people to come physically closer together. Change continues, the move is on from the rural, agricultural model of the past to the urban center. As Miriam Levin states in *Urban Modernity: Cultural Innovation in the Second*

Industrial Revolution:

...rapid economic and technological changes in late-nineteenth-century societies led to conditions of social and political instability. These circumstances demanded new institutions created expressly to manage citizens and take advantage of possibilities for industrial growth. Specifically reacting to class conflict, fear of the unknown consequences of new discoveries, and the weakening of local institutions as nation-states expanded their powers, business and government leaders looked to cities as the loci for organizing new lifestyles, institutions, and professional groups to design and steer the process of modernization. Urbanization marked a significant break with a traditional understanding of society as rooted in agriculture, and required the construction of an entirely new reality in which science and technology would be not only intellectual touchstones but reliable agents of growth.”⁵⁸

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Miriam R. Levin, *Urban Modernity : Cultural Innovation in the Second Industrial Revolution* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2010), 2–3.

It was in the city that organization developed and grew for the sake of maximizing these new scientific innovations; however this gathering of people had some massive implications on society. “The shift of population toward cities also signaled major changes in the way people earned a living, as farming took a back seat to nonagricultural pursuits. In 1850 between 55 and 64 percent of Americans made their living from the soil; by 1920 that figure had dropped to about 26 percent.”⁵⁹ Mark Senter notes this change as well, “Cities had become the focal point of expansion. The value of manufactured goods had surpassed that of farm products in the United States. Whereas 53 percent of the labor force in 1870 were engaged in farming, by 1920 73 percent held nonagricultural jobs.”⁶⁰ The city presented opportunity that drew in young people and immigrants alike; both groups were in transition and leaving the world they had known behind. “The flood of people into American cities was a result of the Industrial revolution and the jobs, especially in factories, that were available in the cities of the land. Some workers came from rural areas and settled in the cities looking for a better living that was available in agricultural communities, but more than twenty-five million entered the United States from Europe, and after the turn of the century a majority of these newcomers settled in cities.”⁶¹

Moral Issues

These changes were not just in the ways that people earned a living, it also

⁵⁹ Ibid., 107.

⁶⁰ Senter, *When God Shows Up: A History of Protestant Youth Ministry in America*, 153.

⁶¹ Ibid., 152.

impacted values. Conflict was part of the changing paradigm as well.

Not only did cities transform the texture and values of American life, they also triggered a deep and enduring cultural clash between city dwellers and rural folk. While this division had long been present in American society, it grew more bitter as cities expanded in number, size, and importance. The farm and village dominated preindustrial America, endowing it with a cluster of values and beliefs; after 1850 the city challenged that position with its own strikingly different values and beliefs.⁶²

There was a whole new slate of optional activities in the city including trips to the saloon, amusement parks, baseball games, roller skating, bicycle rides and theater attendance.

The movement from the rural context to the urban was another change that had significant impact on living.

The challenges and changes to values brings up the moral issues that were changing during the era. While there are many examples of the changing morals, two will be spotlighted here in particular: the conclusion of the temperance movement and the issue of slavery. These two issues were chosen because they both covered a wide spectrum of systems, including the church and politics, and had a national and international impact.

Temperance

At the beginning of this era, the temperance movement was growing in influence and power. Some states were more active than others. Ian R. Tyrell records in his book, *Sobering Up: From Temperance to Prohibition in Antebellum America, 1800-1860*, "The year 1855 represented the pinnacle of achievement for the organized temperance movement in terms of power and influence...In retrospect, the hopes of prohibitionists seem ludicrous, yet in 1855 history seemed to be on their side. They had the tougher laws

⁶² Klein, *The Flowering of the Third America : the Making of an Organizational Society, 1850-1920*, 106.

which experience showed were necessary. In addition, they had growing public support... prohibitionists seemed to be making heartening gains in political influence.”⁶³

But this trend would not last at State levels. As political parties began to move in different directions, enforcement of the new laws provided some significant challenges. The rate and tone of opposition grew, especially among the young and the immigrants. Tyrell summarizes the change:

After New Hampshire passed a prohibitory law in August 1855, not a single new state adopted prohibition for the next twenty-five years, and most of the states which had embraced prohibition in the early 1850s modified or repealed their Maine Laws in the late 1850s and 1860s. Prohibitionist spokesmen agreed that the Maine Law agitation had slumped badly from the high point of political activity in the 1850-1855 period. In Massachusetts, Charles Jewett pronounced the state's Temperance Alliance disorganized, impoverished, and demoralized. Even John Marsh, the eternally optimistic propagandist for the American Temperance Union, conceded that prohibition had received grave setbacks and loss of support in most states. The Main Law phase was over, and the decline of the prohibition had begun.⁶⁴

From the late 1850's through the 1870's most of the State prohibition laws were repealed. This shows the battleground that prohibition had become with many on both sides. States adapted and offered optional laws in the 1870's and 1880's that would allow towns or counties to choose to be “dry” by vote.⁶⁵

While slowed at the State levels, the prohibition movement would not be stopped. Many forces joined the movement. In addition to an organized political party, the Woman's crusade of 1873-1874 made a significant impact in rallying people to the cause. The crusade recruited women to begin their day at church in prayer, followed by trips to

⁶³ Ian R. Tyrrell, *Sobering up : from Temperance to Prohibition in Antebellum America, 1800-1860* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1979), 282.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

all the alcohol selling establishments in town asking the owners to shut down their shops and give up the business. This approach was successful. By 1874 the Woman's Christian Temperance Union had formed.⁶⁶

Many churches also joined the crusade. "By the middle eighteen-eighties... the reform had become a part of the religious faith of the nation."⁶⁷ Most churches held to the belief of total abstinence for the individual and a refusal to work with individuals or companies that supported alcohol. The temperance efforts of the church and the aforementioned organizational spirit led several ministries to young people to embrace a temperance pledge and involve young people in the movement.⁶⁸

The Prohibition political party began to fall apart after the elections of 1888, when it became clear that many of the Protestant voters were struggling to leave their normal political party (usually the Republican party) to vote for a Prohibition party candidate. It had completely broken apart by 1896. In its place arose the Anti-Saloon League which immediately sought to connect the churches and their votes to the issue not to a candidate.⁶⁹ Over time the Anti-Saloon League won favor and many States again enacted prohibition laws. Eventually the National Prohibition came in 1920.⁷⁰ It would be repealed in 1933 after the Great Depression shone the light on many other important

⁶⁵ David Leigh Colvin, *Prohibition in the United States; a History of the Prohibition Party, and of the Prohibition Movement*, (New York: George H. Doran Co., 1926), 101–108, 155–156.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 116–118.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 64.

⁶⁸ Frank Otis Erb, *The Development of the Young People's Movement*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1917); Chaplin, *Francis E. Clark : Founder of the Christian Endeavor Society*.

⁶⁹ Jack S Blocker, *American Temperance Movements: Cycles of Reform* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1989), 100–105.

issues while the Anti-Saloon League continued to insist on prohibition as the most important issue. This seemingly blind loyalty to an issue that many felt was “dealt with”, led to the repeal of the law.⁷¹

Slavery

Another moral issue that gained center stage during this period is that of slavery. While certainly not the only issue involved in the Civil War (1861-1865), one of the issues was the right to own slaves and one of the results of the Union’s victory was abolishment of slavery in the entire country. The issue of slavery had been a topic of conversation among the United States for most of the century, but came to head in the Civil War. The outcome of the war and the consequential abolishment of slavery brought to the forefront this moral issue. It also highlighted some of the conflicts created by development, some people pointed to the technical advancement of the cotton gin as a major factor in the southern states desire to keep slaves.⁷²

These two cases highlight the reality of change being widespread and including significant moral issues. Again the thread for those innovations and change is a look towards the future rather than just a dependency on the past.

Education

One other significant area of change during this period that had a long-term effect was in education. This era saw the development and wide spread acceptance of the public high school which would continue to change the course of families, youth/child labor and

⁷⁰ Ibid., 114–119.

⁷¹ Ibid., 125–126.

⁷² Klein, *The Flowering of the Third America : the Making of an Organizational Society, 1850-1920*, 89.

the role of education in society.

Most education was voluntary and a good many young people simply could not afford to continue their education beyond elementary. The cost of education for families was twofold: first, they had to pay to continue to send their children to school past elementary school; and second, they would be losing the work of their child at home on the farm. But even from the early days of the country, people saw the value in educating their children leading toward college.

The largest change in this came when high school was able to be offered for free. In 1875 the United States Supreme Court decision in the *Stuart et al. V. School District No. 1 of Kalamazoo* case permitted tax money to be used to fund public high schools.⁷³ This was a move away from the private school preparing people for college as available only to the wealthy.

John Franklin Brown, writing about *The American High School* in 1912:

The dominating influence at first seems to have been a desire on the part of the people to give their children increased educational advantages different from those available elsewhere. The grammar schools did not satisfy because they looked to the college, and the course of study was not practical enough. The academy would not do, because it was controlled by a close corporation, and it was expensive. To meet the growing spirit of American freedom and democracy, there was needed an education institution of a different type, one that should be free and under public control like the grammar school, and that should offer a practical, cultural course of study like the academy. There was a demand for education more than the elementary schools provided, different in kind from that found in the grammar schools, and furnished at public expense. The free public high school met this demand and it grew, slowly at first, but with startling rapidity after its usefulness was tested and recognized.⁷⁴

The changes in the cost and availability had a huge impact. “By 1880 more

⁷³ Senter, *When God Shows Up: A History of Protestant Youth Ministry in America*, 113.

⁷⁴ John Franklin Brown, *The American High School*, (New York: The Macmillan company, 1909), 29.

students were enrolled in public high schools than academies. Public high school enrollment had jumped from eighty thousand in 1870 to a half million at the turn of the century.”⁷⁵ This significant change in education would open the doors for many young people who never would have opportunities before for this level of education or the next. This change was certainly made with eyes on the future.

New England

New England, where Francis Clark grew up, was educated and started Christian Endeavor, was an exemplar of the change of the period. Portland, Maine, where he began his ministry and Boston, Massachusetts, where Christian Endeavor would later be located, were port towns who saw the changes in transportation via the railroads and ships and were good examples of the rapid change helping the urban center to grow and diversify.

Portland was able to capitalize on the changes. The Union Army had utilized Portland during the Civil War and the increase in regular business benefitted the city.⁷⁶ In addition Portland had an advantage over other towns, being the deep-water, ice-free port closest to Europe. It became a winter port for Canada and this regular availability to trade from Europe made it an early stop for the railroad.⁷⁷ The changes in transportation brought diversity to these cities.

After a terrible fire in 1866, Portland rebuilt quickly and effectively. In describing the change in the city after the fire one author notes, “...they began building for the

⁷⁵ Senter, *When God Shows Up: A History of Protestant Youth Ministry in America*, 113.

⁷⁶ Michael C. Connolly, “Black Fades to Green: Irish Labor Replaces African-American Labor Along a Major New England Waterfront, Portland, Maine, in the Mid-Nineteenth Century,” *Colby Quarterly* 37, no. 4 (December 2001): 2.

future so that Portland is now... at least fifty years ahead of what she would have been otherwise.”⁷⁸ In addition to new structures, the town saw an increase in young families and immigrants. Like Boston, Portland saw an increase in the number of Irish immigrants around the middle of the 19th century. These new immigrants took most of the wharf jobs that had been held by the few African-Americans in those cities.⁷⁹

As a young pastor in Portland and Boston, Clark would have been impacted by the changes of the day. He would have been keenly aware of the immigrants and their impact on city life. He would have seen first-hand the influx of young families to these growing urban centers. He would have seen the impacts of alcohol and the temperance movement on the church and society. Change was everywhere and Clark would capitalize.

Historically, the decades between 1850 and 1930 were pregnant with opportunities for those possessing the will, resources, and authority to engage in urban rebuilding, to authorize expositions, and to establish museums. Leaders shared an appreciation of society- shaping synergies among these scientific and technologically defined activities that led to the invention of a new urban culture. These men were focused on using science and industrial innovations to create healthful and attractive environments, profitable communication, social order, and institutions for extending these benefits nationally and internationally.⁸⁰

Changes in technical and scientific arenas provide some of the physical evidence for the change of this era, but the changes were much deeper than just those. The organizational emphasis as people learned to work together to maximize output and efficiency was a

⁷⁷ Ibid., 3.

⁷⁸ John Neal, “Greater Portland Landmarks,” in *Portland*, 1869, 75.

⁷⁹ Connolly, “Black Fades to Green: Irish Labor Replaces African-American Labor Along a Major New England Waterfront, Portland, Maine, in the Mid-Nineteenth Century,” 8.

⁸⁰ Levin, *Urban Modernity : Cultural Innovation in the Second Industrial Revolution*, 255.

major change as well, shaping the kinds of jobs and the location of jobs. The technical and scientific, as well as organizational, developments, along with economic growth called people to these urban centers which changed the pattern of living and the values of the people. People's stance and approaches to moral issues changed. Education changed in some significant ways. Change was everywhere and was long-lasting. The wide spread change in this one era pointed towards the future, rather than the past.

These changes created an environment for an organization, like Christian Endeavor, to be organized, promote and grow. In particular advances in technology would help Francis Clark spread the word of Christian Endeavor through better communication and travel. Clark would also capitalize on the organizational movement of the era. He represented an acceptance and utilization of these innovations for his cause: the spread of Christian Endeavor for the service of Christ and the church.

Chapter 3: Church Context

The United States was in the midst of massive transformations. New things were everywhere: new people from all over the world were immigrating to the United States.; new cities were springing up and older cities were becoming large cities; slaves were being made free and children were being valued in a way never before seen. In the midst of all the change, the church was growing and working in these new mission fields. The challenges were great, but the church innovated, adapted and multiplied. In the growing United States the church worked in traditional and non-traditional ways to become a center piece of society through organization and focused evangelization of immigrants, former slaves and the young.

Immigrants

“Once I thought to write a history of the immigrants in America. Then I discovered that the immigrants were American history.”⁸¹

The staggering number of immigrants who came to the United States during the Gilded Age created some incredible challenges and opportunities for the church. As these groups of people moved to the cities where there was work, they came together into sub-groups around common language and ethnicity. The power and impact of these groups on the shape of a young America was immense. The challenges for the church were great; different languages, cultural misunderstandings, poverty, and religious

⁸¹ Oscar Handlin, *The Uprooted; the Epic Story of the Great Migrations That Made the American People*. (Boston: Little, Brown, 1951).

differences all were issues the church had to address. The opportunities were also great; here were thousands of people new to the United States and looking for community, care and meaning. Catholic and Protestant groups were both active in ministering to and reaching out to these immigrants.

Protestants

The Protestant church was very active in evangelization during this time. Efforts to reach the immigrants, former slaves and the young dominated most of their efforts. All of the Protestant denominations were dealing with the immigrant issue and many were attempting to move from an attitude of discrimination to a posture of outreach. Two denominational groups in particular helped set the boundaries for the Protestants work with immigrants during this time: Methodists and Baptists.

Methodists

The Methodist church had risen to great effectiveness and popularity in the early part of the 1800's. Methodists went from less than 3 percent of the nation's church members in 1776 to more than 34 percent by 1850.⁸² Operating without much formal organization or institutionalization, the Methodists were a sect whose focus on empowering laypersons to minister and circuit riders to encourage and bolster those efforts was widely successful. Unfortunately, the Methodists' evangelization efforts of the last half of the century had less effectiveness and zeal, which impacted the Methodists' reach in ministering to the immigrants.

Three main factors contributed to the decline in zeal and effectiveness during this

⁸² Roger Finke and Rodney Stark, *The Churching of America, 1776-2005 : Winners and Losers in Our Religious Economy* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 2005), 156.

time: 1) the formal organization and institutionalization of the church; and related 2) the move away from lay led ministry to a more clergy dependent focus; and 3) the decrease in moral standards. These changes impacted the Methodists' ability to clearly speak against the culture and its momentum for continually sending people into leadership.

The changes in the country also led to some changes in the Methodists. As Roger Finke and Rodney Stark point out in their book, *The Churching of America 1776-2005*, "By the middle of the nineteenth century the Methodist church was no longer staffed by local amateurs supervised by professional circuit riders - most of the circuit riders had dismounted and were now 'settled' pastors."⁸³ In the early days of Methodism, the circuit riders were the lifeblood and stations were quite rare. This had changed. J.M. Buckley writing in 1897, *A History of Methodists in the United States*, observed:

In its first period Methodism relied wholly upon the circuit system for expansion and growth; stations were regarded with disfavor; but with the increase of particular societies in numbers, financial resources, and independence, the multiplication of stations was inevitable, and the distance between them in the United States tended to prevent the continuance of a modified circuit system, which still predominated in England. Gradually the ancient plan has passed away in many sections, and is general only on the frontiers and in regions wholly agricultural. Hence home missions became necessary...⁸⁴

The Methodist church was settling in and was not adapting its effective models to continually engage and challenge the dominant culture. This settling down into stations seems to have led to closer relationships between the educated clergy who had been circuit riders and the people of one area. These closer relationships brought pause to the hard line and prophetically edged messages of the circuit riders. Fewer camp meetings

⁸³ Ibid., 164.

⁸⁴ J. M. Buckley, *A History of Methodists in the United States* (New York: Christian Literature Co., 1896), 650.

and revivals were held and class meetings died out. Finke and Stark note,

Thus we see the Methodists as they were transformed from sect to church. Their clergy were increasingly willing to condone the pleasures of this world and to deemphasize sin, hellfire, and damnation; this lenience struck highly responsive chords in an increasingly affluent, influential, and privileged membership. This is, of course, the fundamental dynamic by which sects are transformed into churches, thereby losing the vigor and the high octane faith that caused them to succeed in the first place.⁸⁵

While the Methodist church was settling down and moving into more “middle-class” territory, it was also losing sight of a great opportunity in the impoverished, urban immigrant population. This is not to say that the Methodist church was now dying off, but rather does point out the slowing down of this great movement and some of the problems it began to encounter.

Leading up to the Civil War, the Methodist church became more and more involved and absorbed with the debate regarding slavery. The ministry to the freed slaves after the war will be addressed later, but it is important to note that the preoccupation with this important issue also hindered some of the conversation regarding ministry to non-slave immigrants during this time.

Home missions were the new work of the Methodists that reached out to the immigrants. There was much competition for the new immigrants and while the Lutheran, Reformed and Catholic church were very effective in their appeals, the Methodist and various sectarian groups forced all churches to be more intentional in their efforts.⁸⁶ By 1906 the Methodist Episcopal Church reported 1,400 congregations conducting worship services in a language other than English and 1,228 of those held no English services. A

⁸⁵ Finke and Stark, *The Churching of America, 1776-2005 : Winners and Losers in Our Religious Economy*, 175.

⁸⁶ Ibid., 153.

good part of these efforts came from recruiting first generation immigrants to minister to the following waves of immigrants through church plants and home missions.

Campmeetings and revivals were not completely gone however, and their emotionalism, fervor and shared purpose proved attractive for immigrants as well. In particular the holiness movement sprang to life during the last half of the century out of the Methodist movement.

But the great American social movement that came to be known as the Holiness Movement arose within Methodism during the latter half of the nineteenth century and was, in large part, a call for return to Wesleyan principles. Linked closely to revivalism and camp meetings, the movement generally called for a reaffirmation of traditional Methodist theology and methods, placing special emphasis on the Wesleyan commitment to sanctification through baptism of the Holy Spirit.⁸⁷

This movement was widely supported by a good number of Methodists laity and at least at first, Methodist bishops. Eventually the lack of control over the evangelists led other sects to develop and form their own denominations.

Baptists

While the Methodists saw a decline in their momentum towards evangelism, especially in the work with new immigrants the Baptists represent the other end of the Protestant churches' effectiveness with these new peoples, seeing unprecedented growth and adoption. There were a few factors at work in this growth: 1) the democratic structure of the Baptist churches; 2) the vision of a Christian nation and 3) the intentional effort to reach the immigrants.⁸⁸

Within the ethos of the Baptist culture is independence. This manifested itself in

⁸⁷ Ibid., 175.

⁸⁸ Lawrence B. Davis, *Immigrants, Baptists, and the Protestant Mind in America* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1973).

the freedom of each congregation to adapt its methods of evangelism however it saw best. This democratic structure allowed for incredible freedom in each local church and thus allowed great adaptability for different cultural customs and language. Because of this adaptability, the needs of the various immigrant populations and groups were able to be met by a variety of local church expressions.

The Baptists put great emphasis on evangelizing the immigrant population in order to keep this new nation Christian. As Lawrence B. Davis comments in his book, *Immigrants, Baptists and the Protestant Mind in America*, “As one of the society’s district secretaries succinctly expressed it, the perpetuity of free institutions and the preservation of American civilization depended upon the evangelization of the entire country....Applied to the immigrant, this belief stated that conversion and concomitant Americanization were necessary for the safety of the American republic as well as for his individual benefit.”⁸⁹ This promoted great urgency on the part of the churches, especially Baptist churches, to evangelize.

But most importantly, the intentionality of the Baptists to reach this group of people stands out. There was a missionary spirit about the Baptist work from the beginning. The Baptists targeted specific immigrant groups for evangelization and worked to reach them through preaching and publications in the native language, as well as through training first generation immigrants.⁹⁰ This approach proved fruitful in the long term as more and more immigrants continued to arrive in America. The two main approaches in reaching immigrants were, (1) to work with immigrants of all nationalities

⁸⁹ Ibid., 95.

⁹⁰ Ibid., 101–103.

at once in places where they were heavily concentrated (Ellis Island, mining towns) and (2) to appoint newly converted immigrants as missionaries to their own ethnic groups.⁹¹ The evangelistic spirit shows through their efforts.

The Baptists were not immune from the slavery debate and eventually split geographically. Albert Henry Newman writing in 1915, *A History of the Baptist Churches in the United States*, notes about the Southern Baptist Convention's split from the North, "Not only did the denomination greatly increase in numbers and in liberality under the new arrangement, but the antinomian and anti-missionary spirit that was rife throughout the South speedily gave place to the triumphant missionary spirit."⁹² There was a sense that the freedom from abolitionists from the North reduced the judgmental spirit and allowed the Baptists in the south to see the importance of reaching all the people around them. These churches took seriously this missionary calling. The impact of the Civil War on the mission work of the Home Mission Board was remarkable. Having sent 750 missionaries, adding 15,000 members and starting 200 new churches before the war, the efforts were focused primarily on the armies during the war and after the number of missionaries sent in 1881 was only thirty-six.⁹³ This spirit would remain and the numbers would eventually return.

Davis summarizes the widespread intentionality of the Baptists efforts well:

The Home Mission Society gradually assumed more and more of the responsibility for immigrant evangelization toward the end of the nineteenth century, but it never became exclusive in this regard. Baptist state conventions

⁹¹ Ibid., 110.

⁹² Albert Henry Newman, *A History of the Baptist Churches in the United States* (New York: Christian Literature, 1894), 455.

⁹³ Ibid., 455–456.

and city mission groups, often aided in finance and direction by the national agency, cooperated in the work among new Americans. The two Women's Baptist Home Mission Societies, which ultimately merged, engaged in activity among foreign-speaking women and children. The American Baptist Publication Society, founded in 1840, printed religious pamphlets and Bibles in various languages for distribution to prospective converts. In this way the drive to bring the alien into the church went forward simultaneously on a variety of fronts.⁹⁴

Throughout the time period the Baptist groups were reaching out to the immigrant populations and starting churches. In this way they were the most aggressive and intentional of the Protestant groups to reach the immigrant population.

Catholics

While the Protestant groups were striving to reach the immigrants, so were the Catholics in ways that largely mirrored the Protestant efforts. The Catholic church's innovation in reaching immigrants materialized mainly in the development of the ethnic or national parish.

A brief note here needs to be made regarding the number of Catholics in the United States during this period. There has been some major efforts to describe the "missing" Catholics during this time. Some numbers arose during the 1850s that would show that Catholicism was the dominant religion in America. The census numbers in the mid 1870's reflected a much smaller number of people claiming Catholicism as their religion than previously stated. There was a sense that many Catholics had defected from the church, but Gerald Shaughnessy showed in his 1925 work, *Has the Immigrant Kept the Faith: A Study of Immigration and Catholic Growth in the United States, 1790-1920*, that most of the "missing" Catholics had never existed in the first place and that the

⁹⁴ Davis, *Immigrants, Baptists, and the Protestant Mind in America*.

numbers used in the 1850s to estimate the total number of Catholics was based on immigrant populations that were assumed to be Catholic. Therefore, the growth of Catholicism to the largest denomination did not happen until the turn of the century.⁹⁵ In fact what the realistic reporting of the census showed was that the Catholic Church was doing a good job. Finke and Stark summarize this well, “These statistics make it clear that the major growth in the proportion of Catholics in the United States took place much later than previous writers have claimed and that, when they finally did arrive by the millions, the immigrants kept the faith.”⁹⁶ But the Catholic Church was trying to do more than just keep people in the church, it was reaching out to these immigrants as well.

The first waves of immigrants to the United States were primarily Irish and German and the population of immigrant Catholics during the 1850’s reflected this as well. Dolores Liptak accurately points out in her book, *Immigrants and Their Church*, that this led to a Catholic identity as primarily immigrant, “Yet, inexorably during the pre-Civil War years, the multiethnic character of the U.S. Catholic church did gradually develop. Apart from a core of Anglo- or Irish-Americans mostly from Maryland or Pennsylvania, Catholic’s became identified as an immigrant people - albeit mostly Irish or German.”⁹⁷ While these waves of immigration began, the churches in America were trying to respond to the changing culture. “Even as the first large waves of Catholic immigrants began to arrive, American Protestantism had not yet enlisted the majority of the population in a local church. Given the similarity in the situations they faced, it is not

⁹⁵ Finke and Stark, *The Churching of America, 1776-2005 : Winners and Losers in Our Religious Economy*, 118–119.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 122.

surprising that Catholics and evangelical Protestants employed similar tactics.”⁹⁸ What were those tactics?

The Catholic Church mimicked well known successful Protestant groups of the time. Finke and Stark point out the similarities:

The basis of Catholic success is remarkably similar to that of the upstart Protestants - the Baptists and Methodists. The Catholics aggressively marketed a relatively intense, otherworldly religious faith to a growing segment of the population. Besides offering familiar liturgy, symbols, and saints, the Catholic Church also emphasized personal renewal through devotional activities and in effect produced its own brand of revivalism.⁹⁹

There was an understanding of the effectiveness of these methods. “Revivals, miraculous cures, heartfelt religious experiences, and emotional spiritual renewal are activities usually associated with various sects of evangelical Protestantism. But each of these was also an important part of parish life in the immigrant Catholic Church. By the middle of the nineteenth century, evangelism had come to the fore of parish life.”¹⁰⁰ Catholic revivals were called, “missions” and were very similar in planning, methods and leadership to Protestant revivals, but still maintained a very Catholic culture including rituals and sacraments. However, the continuing waves of immigrants and the Civil War forced some changes in methodology.

Antebellum attitudes were more mature for the nation that survived its own war and the nation was gaining an identity. With growing diversity, the church struggled to

⁹⁷ Dolores Ann Liptak, *Immigrants and Their Church* (New York; London: Macmillan ; Collier Macmillan Publishers, 1989), 14.

⁹⁸ Finke and Stark, *The Churching of America, 1776-2005 : Winners and Losers in Our Religious Economy*, 124.

⁹⁹ Ibid., 122.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 125.

stay together. “In the rapidly urbanizing and industrializing postwar world, the one problem that undermined cohesiveness was the constantly growing immigrant population. The new membership was even more heterogeneous ethnically than in the prewar era. The multitextured appearance of the Catholic population would, in fact, become the next stumbling block for American Catholics, once again undercutting identification of the church as American.”¹⁰¹ Identity for the immigrants began to be an even larger issue as more immigrants arrived. Liptak continues,

As the century matured, it became clear that a different church was being created in the American setting and that different tactics were needed to develop this urban church. Just as with frontier evangelization and development, this aspect of American Catholic growth was led by an immigrant clergy, with the cooperation of religious men and women and with the financial and moral support of an immigrant people themselves.¹⁰²

In the urban environment where so many different people were living close together, the traditional parish model was not able to meet all the needs of each group of people.

When with the passage of time it proved impossible to continue to serve these desires through neighborhood parishes, the traditional territorial design was altered to allow the formation of “national parishes” that could be attended by members of a specific “nationality” from all across the city. These parishes, organized by nationality or language, became increasingly popular as the diversity and the number of non-English speaking immigrants increased.¹⁰³

Thus Catholicism adapted its parishes in the urban context to include ethnic parishes that would serve a particular language or ethnic group. As the immigrant populations grew, the Catholic church expanded and now included the original urban

¹⁰¹ Liptak, *Immigrants and Their Church*, 61.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, 34.

¹⁰³ Finke and Stark, *The Churching of America, 1776-2005 : Winners and Losers in Our Religious Economy*, 135.

parishes, second, third and fourth generation territorial parishes, as well as, nearby located ethnic parishes serving the variety of spiritual needs of the people and legitimizing the role of ethnic distinctiveness.¹⁰⁴ This model would prove very effective in reaching the immigrant groups through the rest of the century.

With the national parish already established as the model of ministering to immigrants, the Catholic Church welcomed more groups from 1870 to 1924. While arrivals from Germany and Ireland continued, immigration of such major European groups as Italians and Poles increased dramatically. So did immigration from Mexico and French-speaking Canada. Each group brought different religious cultures and had varied expectations of the church as they established themselves in the United States. Accordingly, each group responded differently to the model of the national parish.¹⁰⁵

Utilizing this model, the Catholic Church was able to meet the specific needs of each ethnic group, while also working to keep people part of the unified church.

The Catholic Church in America underwent some significant changes during this time. The adaptation of methods - from the emotionalism and mission to the national parish - which revealed the Catholic churches' awareness of and adaptation to the changing culture, allowed for the Catholic church to grow and find firm footing in America. These changes in method made space for the differing immigrant groups, while keeping them unified in the Catholic Church.

Former Slaves

While the significance of the immigrants was not lost on the church, neither was the opportunity to minister to the freed slaves after the Civil War. The national

¹⁰⁴ Liptak, *Immigrants and Their Church*, 65–66.

¹⁰⁵ Jeffrey M. Burns, Ellen Skerrett, and Joseph Michael White, *Keeping Faith : European and Asian Catholic Immigrants* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 2000).

conversation about slavery had dominated much of the 1850's and 1860's, and the church was no exception to this. After the war, the conversation turned towards the needs and opportunities to reach the freed slaves. Ultimately the churches able to give the most autonomy and allow for the most diversity of expression were able to best embrace the freed slaves.

Before the war, the topic of slavery was dominant in religious conversations. The Baptists and Methodists both saw a split in their church over the issue. This led to some interesting results. Surprisingly, more ministry happened in the south by the southern contingents than before the splits. As Dwight W. Culver reports in, *Negro Segregation in The Methodist Church*, "With the restraint in the matter of their attitude toward slavery removed, the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, looked upon Negro missions as a great opportunity and a special task. No longer a part of a denomination with a strong abolitionist wing, it was able to reach Negroes on plantations where the Methodist gospel had been unwelcome earlier."¹⁰⁶ The Civil War of course changed all of these things.

After the war, the climate was clearly different. There were suddenly a multitude of opportunities available for the freed slaves in terms of religious expression. Directly following the Civil War, the Methodist Church, South struggled to adapt to the new reality and ceased most of its ministry to Negroes. This led to the formation of separate congregations for the freed slaves.¹⁰⁷ The churches from the North saw nothing but opportunity. "The freed slaves were also greeted with a diversity of churches offering multiple expressions of the faith. The denominations of the North, both white and black,

¹⁰⁶ Dwight W. Culver, *Negro Segregation in the Methodist Church.*, 1953, 52.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

sent missionaries and money to start churches for the freed people, and the churches of the South responded quickly to these unwelcome intrusions.”¹⁰⁸ With the competition and opportunities the freed slaves took advantage of the opportunities before them.

There was also still a climate of segregation within the culture and the freed slaves were in need of finding a place to come together and find identity, not unlike the immigrants around them.

The growth of the churches was spurred on by two powerful forces: the *conflicts* they faced with the dominant culture and the *competition* they faced from other churches. The freed slaves of the late nineteenth century took greater advantage of the unregulated religious market than any group in American history. Like the immigrant faiths, religious freedoms allowed African Americans to use the churches as institutional safe havens for supporting their members and their culture.¹⁰⁹

The church provided this much needed place of identity and safety.

The group that did the best job in reaching this group and saw the most growth through their efforts was the Baptist church. While many denominations attempted to reach the freed slaves of the south, the Baptists were able to start the most churches and reach the most in large part because of the autonomy of the local congregation and the democratic structure.¹¹⁰ Before the war the Methodists and Baptists were pretty much the only two groups to minister to the slaves, with the Methodists probably having an edge in membership. After the war this changed significantly. “By 1890, however, the Baptists had gained a very substantial edge over the Methodists and by the early twentieth century their raters (members who were former slaves) were more than double the

¹⁰⁸ Finke and Stark, *The Churching of America, 1776-2005 : Winners and Losers in Our Religious Economy*, 190.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

¹¹⁰ Ibid., 193.

Methodists.”¹¹¹ The Baptist church also did an excellent job of assisting the freed slaves with building new church buildings through loans or generous gifts.¹¹² Finke and Stark summarize it well, “The Baptists invited the free slaves to come as they were, and they did. The Methodists maintained a prominent position with the freed slaves, but they couldn’t keep pace with the Baptists. Once again, the Methodists transformed, the Baptists triumphed.”¹¹³

The freed slaves took advantage of the many options and opportunities presented to them in this new situation. In the end the Baptist church gave them the most autonomy and freedom which allowed them to create churches of safety, where identity and culture could be cultivated.

Congregationalists

One other group of churches is worth mentioning here: the Congregationalists. In many ways frontrunners in moral stances and in missionary impulse, the Congregationalists were the home of Francis Clark. The Congregationalists, as their name suggests, put the authority for polity and doctrinal direction in the hands of the local church congregations.

One has to wonder what could possibly bring a group of churches committed to the independence of each local congregation together in an organization. In this case it was the split with the theologically liberal Unitarians in 1805. This split was exemplified

¹¹¹ Ibid.

¹¹² Newman, *A History of the Baptist Churches in the United States*, 474.

¹¹³ Finke and Stark, *The Churching of America, 1776-2005 : Winners and Losers in Our Religious Economy*, 196.

in the foundation of Andover Theological Seminary, the first seminary in the United States. Andover was begun by a group of clergy and professors who had resigned from Harvard due to the hiring of liberal, Unitarian faculty.¹¹⁴ These “consistent Calvinists” were concerned with theological education and protecting their Calvinist view of theology which had been passed on by the original Pilgrims.

While many of these leaders committed to independence they were willing to unify enough to start Andover which from the beginning had a spirit of theological exploration while standing against the moral temptations of the day.¹¹⁵ The academic program was rigorous and seen as an exemplar. The faculty were also considered top notch. Andover seminary was well known for its academic innovation, faculty and for sending missionaries both at home and abroad.¹¹⁶

The Congregationalists, while standing for a Calvinism they could not quite wholly agree upon, were unified in their approaches to many moral issues of the day. They took a stand against many of the new temptations of entertainment of the day, most especially gambling games and alcohol.¹¹⁷ On the issue of slavery, the seminary and Congregationalists at first took the official stance that what is not directly condemned in Scripture cannot be condemned by man either. In this case, there could not be found any grounds to directly condemn slavery. Many students and some faculty were opposed to slavery from the beginning. “Congregationalists were leaders in many of the antislavery

¹¹⁴ Margaret Lamberts Bendroth, *A School of the Church : Andover Newton Across Two Centuries* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 2008), 6–7.

¹¹⁵ Ibid., 8.

¹¹⁶ Ibid., 62.

¹¹⁷ Marion Lena Starkey, *The Congregational Way: The Role of the Pilgrims and Their Heirs in Shaping America* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1966), 253–255.

societies that sprung up in the North during the 1830s and 1840s.”¹¹⁸ (Youngs 135) The most well-known Congregational abolitionist was Harriet Beecher Stowe whose book, *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*, was a monumental contribution to the abolition movement. Growing up the daughter of a Congregationalist minister, Stowe uses the piety of her youth as part of the contrast between the slave Tom, who holds to his faith, and master Simon Legree, who lives very “worldly”. However, in the late 1840’s the Andover position formally changed and it began to hold the position that slavery violated the principles of Jesus and His teaching.¹¹⁹

Andover would become known as a sending school. Directly tied to the famous “Haystack Prayer Meeting”, the seminary would be active in sending missionaries abroad and at home. These home missionary bands took the congregational church to the Midwest and there were well known for their anti-slavery message.¹²⁰ While the Baptists and Methodists had larger numbers in their denominations, the Congregationalists were on the front edge of ministry to slaves and former slaves. Congregationalists were the first to start to educate former slaves. “Perhaps even more remarkable was the achievement of the American Missionary Society in founding Negro schools in the South after the Civil War.”¹²¹

This spirit of change, organization and responding to moral issues was enwrapped in the Congregational churches of New England. Clark grew up in the midst of this

¹¹⁸ J. William T Youngs, *The Congregationalists* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1990), 135.

¹¹⁹ Daniel Day Williams, “The Andover Liberals: a Study in American Theology” (Octagon Books, 1970), 24–25.

¹²⁰ Bendroth, *A School of the Church : Andover Newton Across Two Centuries*, 63.

¹²¹ Starkey, *The Congregational Way*, 282.

conversation and was educated at Dartmouth and Andover, two center pieces of the controversies and innovations.

In the growing United States the church worked in traditional and non-traditional ways to become a center piece of society through focused evangelization of immigrants, former slaves and the young. There were many differences in approaches to reaching these groups of people depending on theology and context, but the evangelistic heartbeat of the church continued on. As the church adapted, contextualized its message and evangelized, it grew to become a significant part of the American fabric, touching all areas of the population from young to old, from new immigrant to life-long settler, from poor to rich and from former slaves to former masters. The church proved its ability to innovate and grow with culture during this period. This set up an environment that was fertile ground for the Christian Endeavor seed to grow. The increased openness to more people groups and the innovations used to reach them set up the church and culture to receive Christian Endeavor and its focus on young people.

Chapter 4: Ministry to Young People

The church of the Gilded Age also went through a major transformation in its efforts to reach the children and young people. For the first time, the church began to adjust its educational and evangelistic efforts to meet the needs of children and youth, instead of catering to the needs of the Sunday School teacher. The Sunday School flourished during this period, becoming more organized and unified as it moved from a parachurch organization into the church itself. The efforts to reach youth also began to take hold for the first time with the development of the Christian Endeavor Society. The newly developed Y.M.C.A. sought to reach the young adults of the period and out of this ministry grew the great Volunteer Student Movement. As the church focused on the young it realized great success in its innovations during this period.

Sunday School

The Sunday School proved to be an incredibly important and valuable tool for reaching young people for Christ. It began as a lay movement outside the church for the lower class young people. By the end of this era it had become organized throughout the country, incorporated into the church, and was seen as an acceptable tool for religious education. This transformation happened quickly and was largely due to the success of the new adaptations.

It has been said that where man blocks the way, the Holy Spirit will cut a new channel. A good example for this would be the Sunday School movement. While it

started in England, its history in the United States is not that much different. It was a lay led organization from the beginning targeting those who were not being reached by the current church. Edwin Wilbur Rice noted in his book, *The Sunday-School Movement 1780-1917 and the American Sunday-School Union 1817-1917*,

The lack of education of young persons who were apprenticed to trades was conspicuous. This not only hindered their efficiency as workmen, but led to various form of vice and depravity. Most of these persons were children of indigent parents. Because of the lack of free public schools, they had not received instruction in early life. So Sunday, it was remarked, “was employed for the worst of purposes; the deprivation of morals and manners.”¹²²

The formal church did not have a way to reach this kind of young person, nor was the church sure it wanted to. Laymen and women of God saw the need and acted, forming Sunday Schools to educate these young people using Scripture. Rice continues, “At first, therefore, this new scheme was rejected by the churches, though accepted by individuals as a philanthropic movement for the moral and religious education of all classes. It thus became largely a movement sustained by laymen, and upon a union basis; not opposed to, though not a part of, the organized work of the local church.”¹²³

The Sunday School proved to be very evangelistic and while not embraced by the church, took on the fervor that the local church had assumed. Sunday schools took on the evangelistic theme of the day: Christianize America so America can Christianize the world. This was seen as one of the main priorities even influencing teacher selection. “During the ‘revivalistic’ thrust the Sunday school teachers were sometimes recruited for

¹²² Edwin Wilbur Rice, *The Sunday School Movement 1780-1917, and the American Sunday-School Union 1817-1917*. (New York: Arno Press, 1971), 44.

¹²³ Ibid.

their zeal and ability to secure conversions.”¹²⁴ The success of this lay-led movement was remarkable.

The Sunday School grew in numbers and in acceptance within the church. Between 1872-1890 the Sunday school was one of the great uniting factors of the church. By 1884 it was estimated that nearly twenty percent of the entire population of the United States was connected with Protestant Sunday schools.¹²⁵ The Sunday school often led the way in evangelistic and educational strategy for the church.

The rise and expansion of the Sunday School in America was as rapid as that of the public school, if not more so. One reason for this is that “the common people took to them gladly.” What had begun as a school for the poor had become quickly upgraded to middle class respectability. The Sunday school was no longer an arm of charity but a club to which almost anyone could belong. Sunday school exponents claimed, as did their common school counterparts, that the Sunday school was democratic. At this point it was visualized as a common Sunday school, common to all children.¹²⁶

One of the reasons for this widespread acceptance was increased organization. This manifested itself in two main ways. First, because of so many different people using Sunday Schools in so many different settings, there was a need for an organized and institutional Sunday School movement. Secondly, and quite related, there was the development of a unified lesson plan for all Sunday schools. This second result of more organization within the Sunday School was quite significant in unifying the movement and the churches of the period. Two factors led up to the acceptance of a Uniform Lesson System of Sunday School: 1) The Civil War which emphasized the need for unity and the

¹²⁴ Robert A. Crandall, *The Sunday School as an Instructional Agency for Religious Instruction in American Protestantism, 1872-1922*, 1977.

¹²⁵ Ibid.

¹²⁶ Ibid.

dangers of division; and 2) the Sunday-school institution movement which worked to unify educational principles and ideas for Sunday school.¹²⁷ In 1872 at the National Sunday School Convention a system of Uniform lessons was agreed on for the next quarter century to be used by all Sunday schools across the country. This received support from Dwight L. Moody and other significant leaders of the day.¹²⁸ The Uniformed Sunday school lessons had one lesson for all ages that would be shared in all Sunday schools throughout the world.

Sunday Schools were wide-spread, well-maintained and operated by good lay people from local churches and there was a unified curriculum. Because of this, they became adopted by local churches and incorporated into the active ministries of those churches. In addition to the change to a unified curriculum, churches during this period began to build church buildings that would have space to accommodate the Sunday schools, whereas before the Sunday schools were forced to meet outside the church buildings. Around 1870 special attention was given to designing church space to accommodate Sunday school and its new uniform lessons.¹²⁹ The Church recognized the value of this ministry and brought it under its roof, literally and figuratively.

While the new unified lessons brought much unity within the Sunday schools, and their churches, this was also the seedbed for some rising issues within the Sunday School. The educational model was not student centered at all. “All of the emphasis was upon the

¹²⁷ George Batten, *Directory of the Religious Press of the United States: a List of All Religious Periodicals with Their Denomination; Frequency of Issue; Number of Pages; Size of Pages; Whether Illus.; Subscription Price; Circulation; Distribution; Editor and Publisher*. (New York: George Batten, 1892), 296–297.

¹²⁸ Crandall, *The Sunday School as an Instructional Agency for Religious Instruction in American Protestantism, 1872-1922*.

teacher who was to turn out the right kind of product, the pupil. Among the most serious problems of the period was the failure of leaders to understand child nature or to appreciate the unity of the educational process. The Uniform lessons had brought unity of effort, but not unity of educational outcomes.”¹³⁰ Of particular problem was that the unified lesson was to be used for all ages which would have included children aged five to mid-twenties. “Interestingly, little objection was raised to the lack of educational adaptation to younger pupils through the lessons not being graded. This could have been expected especially when the 1879 year was devoted to an eclectic study of both Testaments. Forty-five of the lessons that year were entirely didactic, which made their adaptation to all ages exceedingly difficult.”¹³¹ Most Sunday School teachers, forced with a choice to make, began modifying the lessons to best suit a younger audience rather than the original young man that it had targeted when it began. As was recorded by a well-known pastor of the time, Thomas Chalmers:

The Sunday School was in quite vigorous operation but there was no link which joined it to the church. There came a time in the life of every youth when he considered himself too big for Sunday-School and not yet old enough to acquiesce in the somber regime of a full-fledged Christian. There was a wide desert through which the waters of Christianity and church life had to run, and there was considerable leakage away into the sands of sin and indifference.¹³²

The Sunday school curriculum ultimately adapted, based on public school educational models, but this time period of decreasing the target age of the lessons created a vacuum

¹²⁹ Batten, *Directory of the Religious Press of the United States*, 282–283.

¹³⁰ Crandall, *The Sunday School as an Instructional Agency for Religious Instruction in American Protestantism, 1872-1922*.

¹³¹ Ibid.

¹³² Thomas Chalmers, *The Juvenile Revival : or, The Philosophy of the Christian Endeavor Movement* (St. Louis: Christian Pub. Co., 1893), 35.

among young adults in the church.

Despite these few issues, the Sunday schools thrived. “In 1826 the number of Sunday school pupils was estimated at 180,000. Compared to the population of that date, only 1.8 percent of the population were Sunday school pupils. But in 1905, 14.7 percent were pupils in Sunday school. This represented a percentage increase of nearly eight times in eighty years.”¹³³ With this growth came widespread use and acceptance. As the Sunday school grew in numbers, acceptance by the local church and denominations, and familiarity around the country, it came to be the accepted religious educational tool of the church. The focus moved toward utilizing the educational theories and principles being implemented in secular education.¹³⁴ During the 1890’s the Sunday school became more readily joined with the institutional church in both Protestant and Catholic circles, refined its role to specifically Biblical instruction, and began to adapt its methods to be more student centered. “The Sunday school then, during the first ten years of the twentieth century, had been recognized as an educational institution fully capable of providing proper religious instruction for the church. The theoretical emphasis had moved almost completely from evangelism to the building of character, from discipline to development, and from dispensing of truth by the teacher to the discovery of truth by the pupil.”¹³⁵

The Sunday School movement went through many changes during this time period, but somehow remained able to be a major evangelistic force for the church. Its strong ties to Scripture, to the young and to laypeople helped keep it moving forward. As

¹³³ Crandall, *The Sunday School as an Instructional Agency for Religious Instruction in American Protestantism, 1872-1922*.

¹³⁴ Batten, *Directory of the Religious Press of the United States*, 90–91.

it grew and became more organized, the vision of leadership to unify lessons and incorporate it into the church became another sustaining element. However, more was needed to reach the young during this time. Sunday School was moving into churches and was becoming more focused on the younger children. The Y.M.C.A. was beginning to focus on the group of young adults that were older, more independent and without family connections.

Young Men's Christian Association

The Young Men's Christian Association (Y.M.C.A.) began out of both a protectionist and evangelistic mindset. The two purposes were to win young men to Christ and to offer these young men a safe place to live in the city. While it had to find its own way in the United States, it was from the beginning associated with the local church and helped to start the Student Volunteer Movement.

The Y.M.C.A. came to the United States from London, but it quickly adapted to its new turf. Howard Hopkins, in his *History of the Y.M.C.A. In North America*, notes of the beginning of the Y.M.C.A., "The American Y.M.C.A. is the fruit of a pietistic English seedling transplanted in 1851 to the fertile soil of North America."¹³⁶ The first stop for the movement was Boston, Massachusetts. The London idea came to America mostly through the Boston Association. Boston's Y.M.C.A. served as a model for constitution, reports, and lecture series for the many other associations being created in

¹³⁵ Crandall, *The Sunday School as an Instructional Agency for Religious Instruction in American Protestantism, 1872-1922*.

¹³⁶ Charles Howard Hopkins, *History of the Y.M.C.A. in North America* (New York: Association Press, 1951), 15.

cities across the country.¹³⁷ From Boston the idea quickly spread. Hopkins records:

The rapid spread of Y.M.C.A.'s across the United States and Canada followed news of the success of the Boston and Montreal Associations; within three years virtually every major city and many smaller ones had Y.M.C.A.'s. Their immediate preoccupation was chiefly with evangelism, which from the beginning included welfare and relief services. Libraries, lecture courses, and social activities that centered in 'rooms' strategically situated and attractively furnished supported the primary concern for the spiritual and moral welfare of young men adrift in the new cities; the idea also took root among German immigrants, Negroes, and college students.¹³⁸

Of great importance for this movement in America is its evangelistic thrust. The Y.M.C.A. in America started, unlike its parent in London and sister in Montreal, with a decided emphasis on evangelical Protestantism.¹³⁹ The thrust towards evangelism kept it vibrant and in partnership with the church. "The Associations of the 1850's were intimately related to the evangelical Protestant churches. The Movement not only attached itself to them but it breathed their theological and ethical atmosphere... It was the chief motivating force and promotional agency of the nation-wide revivals of 1857-1858."¹⁴⁰ The movement was largely lay led, like the Sunday School movement's start, despite its partnership with churches and revivals. "Although the revival fervor cooled quickly in some cities, its effect upon the Y.M.C.A. Movement was pervasive and far-reaching. Of the ninety-eight Associations reported to the Troy Convention of 1859 as new that year, most had come into being because of it."¹⁴¹ From the beginning of the movement evangelism was at its core.

¹³⁷ Ibid.

¹³⁸ Ibid.

¹³⁹ Ibid., 18–19.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid., 15.

¹⁴¹ Ibid., 83.

Indeed the evangelistic heartbeat of the Y.M.C.A. would continue to beat through most of this time period.

A child of evangelical Protestantism, the Y.M.C.A. At first considered itself a specialized agency for bringing young men to Christ. Out of revivalism and community-wide welfare effort there slowly emerged service features of permanent value and a congenial religious work methodology. The later great Association developments of boys' work and education were but the enlargement of programs that few from the religious and welfare activities of the post-Civil War era.¹⁴²

Even though the main focus of the Y.M.C.A. would change and its activities expand greatly, evangelism would remain the impetus for its identity and activity in America through this time period.

This is not to say that the evangelistic thrust was always met with agreement. "Yet the evangelical basis was neither universally accepted nor did it always result in happy community relations. In at least six of the first Associations it was a matter of grave concern..."¹⁴³ The struggle would continue even up to the Civil War, with leadership continually debating the importance of it and mostly continuing to embrace it as a core principle. Again and again after the Civil War the leadership of the Y.M.C.A. expressed the primary objective to be "to win these young men to know Christ".¹⁴⁴ The ministry of the Y.M.C.A. grew with time as well. During the last third of the century, the Y.M.C.A. expanded its work to include various other groups including: younger boys and camping; Army-Navy; American Indians; Negroes; foreign language groups; rural young men; and railroad and industrial workers.¹⁴⁵

¹⁴² Ibid., 179.

¹⁴³ Ibid., 49.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid., 180.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid., 200–227.

After the Civil War, undergraduate education saw a large increase in numbers as the quality of education increased. In 1873 there were twenty-three thousand undergraduate students, but twenty-five years later there were one hundred thousand. During this same time the Y.M.C.A. began to adapt to start college associations on campuses.¹⁴⁶ This work proved to be quite successful. “By 1891 the student work had grown until there were 345 Associations, with 22,241 members.”¹⁴⁷ One of the overflows of the student Y.M.C.A. was the Mt. Hermon Student Conference in 1886 out of which the Student Volunteer Movement was started.¹⁴⁸ Dwight L. Moody called the Y.M.C.A. college movement, “the greatest Christian movement of the century.”¹⁴⁹

Student Volunteer Movement

While not solely focused on evangelism in the United States, the Student Volunteer Movement is worth mentioning here because of its roots in the Y.M.C.A. and because of its impact on the missionary vision of the church during this time.

After the Civil War, young people were more and more able to get a college education. “The half century between the Civil War and World War I was a time of remarkable change and growth in American higher education. From 1870 to 1900, while the country’s population nearly doubled (from 40 million to 76 million), the number of college students increased almost fivefold from 52,000 to 238,000. The percentage of college-aged youth in college or university went from less than 2 percent in 1870 to more

¹⁴⁶ Ibid., 272.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid., 282.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid., 294.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid., 279.

than 12 percent in 1930.”¹⁵⁰ This was a fertile ground for ministry. The Y.M.C.A. was active there and their ministry lead to the formation of the Student Volunteer Movement. “The Student Volunteer Movement for Foreign Missions (Student Volunteer Movement), born at a Young Men’s Christian Association conference at Dwight L. Moody’s New England convention center in 1886, popularized for several subsequent generations of students the watchword, ‘The evangelization of the world in this generation.’”¹⁵¹

The Y.M.C.A. became a recruiting ground for the Student Volunteer Movement. “In the heyday of the students associations (YMCA and YWCA) in the United States, one out of a hundred American college and university students attended the Student Volunteer Movement conventions held every four years. Through campus programs and conventions the Student Volunteer Movement challenged college and university students to consider a career in foreign missions service.”¹⁵² After the Mount Hermon camp the Student Volunteer Movement grew rapidly. “By the time of the Cleveland convention, there were 6,200 Student Volunteers from 352 educational institutions in the United States and Canada. And 321 volunteers had already sailed for overseas service. In addition, 40 colleges and 32 seminaries were involved in financial support of their alumni who had gone overseas as Volunteers. All of this had taken place in just five years since the Mt. Hermon conference. The Movement had also reached out and planted seeds of similar movements in Great Britain, Scandinavia and South Africa.”¹⁵³

¹⁵⁰ Nathan D. Showalter, *The End of a Crusade : the Student Volunteer Movement for Foreign Missions and the Great War* (Lanham, Md.: Scarecrow Press, 1997), 1–2.

¹⁵¹ Ibid.

¹⁵² Ibid., 2.

¹⁵³ David M. Howard, *Student Power in World Missions* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1979), 96.

In the Y.M.C.A. and its offspring the Student Volunteer Movement, it can be seen that this period was a great time for evangelization for and through the young adults. This time period saw an increasing awareness of developmental differences and much success in ministering in different ways to different age groups.

Young People's Associations

When the Y.M.C.A. came to the United States it found a fertile soil. Churches were beginning to experiment with different ways to reach young people specifically. Frank Otis Erb's dissertation on *The Development of the Young People's Movement* from the period reports that many church records show young people societies started throughout the 1850's and 1860's in churches.¹⁵⁴ The Y.M.C.A.'s emphasis on gathering young people especially for prayer had a big impact on the culture of the day. Theodore Cuyler, one of the biggest influences on Clark and the Christian Endeavor movement, started his own church prayer meeting after being influenced by the Y.M.C.A. Erb continues:

Here then is the pivotal point in the appropriation of the young people's movement by the church. The purely religious foundation of the successful Y.M.C.A., with its watchword, "Young men for young men," led to the Young People's Association, with its devotional meeting as its central function, with its constitution, committee work, and social functions, and its watchword, "Young people for young people." This society became the starting-point for many Young People's Associations all over the country, and in particular led Dr. Clark, founder of the Christian Endeavor movement, "to believe that a Young People's Society might be made to do efficient work for the church with which it was connected."¹⁵⁵

Here it can be seen that Christian Endeavor's own beginning stands in the stream of the

¹⁵⁴ Erb, *The Development of the Young People's Movement.*, 48.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid., 38.

Y.M.C.A. and its evangelistic movement.

Prayer meetings for young people had begun during the 1850's. An article from the popular religious newspaper, *Young People's Union*, illustrates the church's efforts, "A prayer-meeting was started in the First Baptist Church [New York City] among the young people nearly half a century ago... The meetings grew in power. It forced them to go into the large lecture room."¹⁵⁶ These prayer meetings were known to pop up from time to time, but few displayed any longevity and none managed to gather the attention of larger Protestant churches. Erb notes:

While there were probably hundreds of such more or less organized societies in existence in 1881, they were the exception rather than the rule. In the ordinary church, the revival would arouse a company of young men or women, less frequently both together, to organize a praying band to meet and pray for the unconverted. These bands had no further reason for existence and died out when the revival was over. The pastor's class in preparation for church membership and for further training after entering the church was much more frequent and stable.¹⁵⁷

Through the influence of the Y.M.C.A. there were some start-ups, but nothing with the organization and energy that would come with Christian Endeavor.

Christian Endeavor

Ministry to young people, from early teens to early twenties, during the Gilded Age was mostly non-existent or in its fledgling stages. Much of the church's efforts were either aimed younger, to children through the Sunday School, or aimed older, to young adults through the Y.M.C.A. and Student Volunteer Movement. These developments were significant for the church, but also left an age group without any specific ministry.

¹⁵⁶ *Young People's Union*, February 13, 1892, 6.

¹⁵⁷ Erb, *The Development of the Young People's Movement.*, 50.

A growing number of churches were attempting to reach and minister to young people through prayer meetings and Young People Associations, but they struggled to maintain energy and purpose. With Sunday School preparing children so well and an effective movement for older college aged young people, there was a void for Christian Endeavor to enter in ministry to youth.

In Clark's eyes, the church was setting young people up for failure in their faith. As they grew older, Sunday School ceased to be a relevant option for their growth and the adults of the church would not have them as members. His many efforts to reach and entertain the young had left him feeling empty. Out of this dedication to the young and to their continued involvement in the Kingdom came Clark's innovative Young People's Society of Christian Endeavor. The Constitution had been signed, but what difference would it make?

Sixty young people signing their names to a new constitution for a young people's society could not have appeared revolutionary. In a world with such massive changes and fluidity, many things started and few of them continued for long. Clark records his hesitancy to put a lot of faith in this new society:

The only record which I find in a brief diary kept in those days concerning the beginning of the Christian Endeavor Society reads as follows: 'Feb. 2, 1881. The boys and girls take tea with me, about thirty-five of them, and we form a young people's society, with Granville Staples for President.'

Two days later, Feb. 4 is this record: "First young people's meeting conducted by the new association. Very successful."

I remember far more about this meeting than this hasty diary records. I went to it, I remember, with a good deal of anxiety. I had begun to feel almost hopeless concerning any new plan for the nurture of the young people, so many had been tried with unsatisfactory results. I feared that this new society would go the way of all the others, and that the promise which the members had made at their pastor's house, two days before, would seem so onerous and burdensome that

they would not fulfill it.¹⁵⁸

It was not apparent at the start that Christian Endeavor would have much of an impact on the church, young people or Clark. Clark and the young people followed through and the beginnings seemed promising.

Clark came to the first meeting with a commitment to help support the meeting, but not to lead it. As the young people arrived he sat as one of them. Twenty-two year old Granville Staples, who had been elected the first president of the society, was the leader of the first prayer meeting, but he did not have to beg for response or participation.¹⁵⁹ These young men and women remembered their promise to become active participants.

The result was that, instead of the three or four little sermonettes and long prayers which had heretofore filled up the hour of the young people's meeting, forty young people, more or less, with Scripture verses and sentences of prayer, and some of the more experienced with longer testimonies or exhortations, were heard in those precious and prophetic sixty minutes devoted to the first genuine Christian Endeavor prayer-meeting.¹⁶⁰

This was different in many ways than the usual church prayer meeting. Erb describes ordinary church prayer meetings of the day:

In many cases the minister used up all the time except for one or two long, able, and ancient prayers by elders or deacons. Those who spoke must "speak to edification," and this frequently consisted in a long review of the entire Christian and pre-Christian experience of the confessor, given for the *n*th time in the same words...The meetings were led without preparation, the singing was spiritless, the prayers tame, and the questions answered perfunctorily. The young people were either absent from such services or silent, and when an especially courageous young soul ventured to testify he was in danger of being waited on by the elders and urged to keep quiet until he could speak to edification.¹⁶¹

¹⁵⁸ Clark, *World Wide Endeavor : the Story of the Young People's Society of Christian Endeavor, from the Beginning and in All Lands*, 71.

¹⁵⁹ Clark, *Christian Endeavor in All Lands*, 43-44.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid., 44.

¹⁶¹ Erb, *The Development of the Young People's Movement.*, 54.

What lead to the change? “It was evidently the little clause relating to the prayer-meeting which had wrought this marvelous change. This clause, which was afterwards expanded into the prayer-meeting pledge, read as follows: ‘It is expected that all members of the society will be present at every meeting, unless detained by some absolute necessity, and that each one will take some part, however slight, in every meeting.’”¹⁶² This level of participation changed everything. Clark quickly realized the power of this kind of participation and ownership by the young:

This thought entirely revolutionized the prayer-meeting idea of that church so far as the young people were concerned. It was not a place primarily of instruction, for learned essays or homilies, or even for “edification” in the old fashioned sense of the term. It was a place for arousing the dormant religious life, for training and practice in the expression of that life, for the development of courage in acknowledging one’s convictions, of sympathy for those who were struggling forward on the same up-hill road to the Celestial City, and of encouragement to the weakest and humblest who, thus comparing notes, as it were, with others in the same stage of religious development, would gain a help that they could never get from the learned and experienced.”¹⁶³

In what seemed counter-intuitive, the young people responded not to efforts to entertain them, but rather the opportunity to lead and serve each other in a supportive environment.

This first prayer meeting surpassed even Clark’s fondest expectations. It was a revelation to him of what could be. “The pastor of the society was surprised and delighted with the result of that first Christian Endeavor prayer-meeting. His little faith in young people was increased, and he went home from the meeting with a new song in his heart and a new hope for the future of the young people of the church.”¹⁶⁴ The momentum did

¹⁶² Clark, *Christian Endeavor in All Lands*, 44.

¹⁶³ Ibid., 45–46.

¹⁶⁴ Clark, *World Wide Endeavor : the Story of the Young People’s Society of Christian Endeavor, from the Beginning and in All Lands*, 72.

not stop there.

But this meeting, though the first, was by no means the last of the series, nor was it the best, for each successive meeting seemed to grow in interest and power. Numbers increased rapidly. Young men and women who never thought of going to a prayer-meeting before were attracted to this one. When they came once, they came again, and often were soon enrolled as earnest Christians and active members of the society. The halting, stumbling, but genuinely sincere, utterances of these young disciples, the heartiness of their singing, the very Scripture verses which they made their own as they brought them to the meeting, gave new power and a perennial interest to a meeting which before had often been a dragging discouragement to pastor and young people alike. No longer now did the pastor look forward with apprehension to the Friday evening meeting, but with eager anticipation as to a place where he should himself gain spiritual help and new courage for his work, and in which his part, if he chose, might be as slight as that of the youngest boy.¹⁶⁵

In addition to the prayer meeting, the new society involved the work of committees. The work of the prayer meeting committee was to organize and run the aforementioned prayer meetings for the young people. The social committee created social events for young people that would make the church their social center. The first social gathering was deemed a success because in addition to numbers all young people were valued. “No wallflowers were allowed to adorn the sides of the room. No little groups, and cliques were expected to spend the evening together to the neglect of their companions. It was a bright, breezy, entertaining gathering; and all went away feeling that a new social centre for the young people had been found, and that centre was the church to which they belonged.”¹⁶⁶

The other committee formed in the original constitution was the lookout committee. Its role was to help facilitate growth and retention in the society. It was to find new members, and bring them in and introduce them to the work and to the workers.

¹⁶⁵ Clark, *Christian Endeavor in All Lands*, 44–45.

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 48.

It was to be a kind of outside conscience to the indifferent and careless, to remind them of their duties, and to win them back to their allegiance. In a sense, indeed, this was the great fly-wheel of the society which was to keep all the other wheels running. Its duties and offices were perhaps quite as original as any other feature of the new organization, and it has proved an indispensable adjunct wherever the Christian idea has found its way.¹⁶⁷

The prayer meeting and the work of the committees were different because they were led and run by young people. The society was a training ground that gave young people a place, a purpose and an opportunity to learn, experiment and grow. Clark and other Endeavor leaders believed young people, “needed to be challenged and to be given responsibilities for ministry tasks; otherwise, they would drift away and seek challenges in other places.”¹⁶⁸ It should be noted that adults, like Clark, were present and involved in supporting roles. The society and the young people flourished.

As the prayer meetings grew and as the impact of Christian Endeavor became obvious in the lives of young people, Clark became an even bigger advocate for their participation in the ministry of the church. The adults of the church too realized the value of young people’s involvement as Dr. Clark notes in his journal a short time later: “After the founding of the Christian Endeavor Society, the tone had changed: ‘Resolved: that we believe in conversion: that we believe in the conversion of children at an early age: that we believe that children who give satisfactory evidence of a change of heart and express

¹⁶⁷ Ibid., 49.

¹⁶⁸ Coble, “Where Have All the Young People Gone?,” 314.

a desire to join the church should be admitted to the church.”¹⁶⁹

An area that had been one of the larger problems of the church, at least in the pastor's eyes, was now a strength. Where there had been apathy and little to no involvement, there was now excitement and sustainable leadership from the young people themselves. “In other words, an organization as nearly self-governing and self-propagating as any organization can be had come into existence in Williston Church, and the problem which had exercised the heart of this pastor and thousands of others had in a measure been solved.”¹⁷⁰

However, after presenting the constitution and the idea for the young person's society, all the young people present signed the constitution.¹⁷¹ What followed was nothing less than everything that Dr. Clark (and doubtless countless others) had been praying for: the youth became actively engaged in the work of prayer, sharing the gospel and service in the church.

The growth of Christian Endeavor was remarkable. In 1882 there were seven known societies. In 1883 there were 56. Growth continued to 156 societies in 1884. In 1886 there were 850 societies, representing eight denominations, thirty-three states and seven foreign countries. In 1887, only six years after starting, over seven thousand societies were reported with over half a million members. Five years later, in 1892 there were 21,080 societies. By 1902 there were 52,000 societies and nearly three and three-quarter million members representing all of the United States and forty-one foreign

¹⁶⁹ Clark and Clark, *A Son's Portrait of Dr. Francis E. Clark.*, 79.

¹⁷⁰ Clark, *Christian Endeavor in All Lands*, 50.

¹⁷¹ Chaplin, *Francis E. Clark: Founder of the Christian Endeavor Society*, 33.

countries. In 1913 the five million member mark was surpassed. In 1921 the society reported 80,000 societies covering the world!¹⁷²

¹⁷² The numbers listed are gathered from the following two sources as well as Convention reports from the various years, Clark, *Christian Endeavor in All Lands*; Clark, *Training the Church of the Future*; *Auburn Seminary Lectures on Christian Nurture with Special Reference to the Young People's Society of Christian Endeavor as a Training-school of the Church*,.

Chart 1: Christian Endeavor Growth in Numbers

Year	Societies	Members
1881	1	60
1882	6	400
1883	56	2,870
1884	156	8,905
1885	253	14,892
1886	850	30,906
1887	7,000	150,000
1889	7,672	485,000
1890	11,013	660,000
1891	16,247	No report
1892	21,110	1,333,000
1893	26,284	1,577,040
1894	33,729	2,023,800
1895	41,229	2,473,740
1896	46,125	2,750,000
1897	50,780	3,000,000
1898	54,191	3,250,000
1899	55,813	3,350,000
1907	69,138	3,456,900
1911	79,077	3,953,850
1913	No report	5,000,000
1921	80,000	5,250,000

Society Growth 1881-1921



Membership Growth 1881-1921

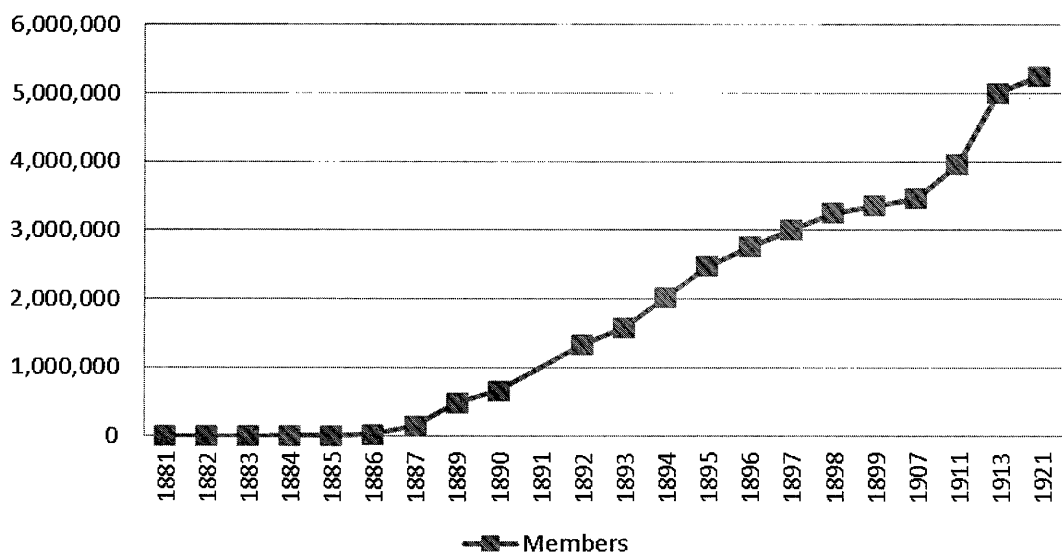


Chart 2: Christian Endeavor Growth by State and Nations

Year	States	Nations
1881	Maine	none
1882	Maine, Massachusetts	none
1883	Maine, Missouri, New York, Massachusetts, Illinois, Rhode Island, Vermont, Iowa, California, Wisconsin, New Hampshire, New Jersey, Michigan, Connecticut	none
1884	California, Colorado, Connecticut, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont, Washington Territory, Wisconsin	Canada
1885	California, Connecticut, Colorado, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont, Washington Territory, Wisconsin	Canada
1886	Alabama, Arizona, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Dakota, District of Columbia, Florida, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Texas, Utah, Vermont, Washington Territory, West Virginia, Wisconsin	Canada, Ceylon, Hawaii, China
1887	Alabama, Arizona, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Dakota, Delaware, District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Indiana, Illinois, Indian Territory, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, Ohio, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, Vermont, Virginia, Washington Territory, West Virginia, Wisconsin	Canada, Ceylon, China, Hawaii, Spain, Scotland, South Africa, Turkey, Syria

Year	States	Nations
1888	Alabama, Arizona, Arkansas, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Dakota, Delaware, District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Idaho, Illinois, Indiana, Indian Territory, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Mississippi, Montana, Nebraska, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, Vermont, West Virginia, Wisconsin, Wyoming	Canada, Syria, Turkey, Ceylon, China, Hawaii, Burma, Spain, Scotland, South Africa, Turkey
1889	Alabama, Arizona, Arkansas, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Dakota, Delaware, District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Idaho, Illinois, Indiana, Indian Territory, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, Vermont, Virginia, Washington, West Virginia, Wisconsin, Wyoming	no report
1890	Alabama, Arizona, Arkansas, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Idaho, Illinois, Indiana, Indian Territory, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, North Dakota, Ohio, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, Vermont, Virginia, Washington, West Virginia, Wisconsin, Wyoming	no report

Year	States	Nations
1891	Alabama, Arkansas, Arizona, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Idaho, Illinois, Indiana, Indian Territory, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Mexico, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, North Dakota, Ohio, Oregon, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, Vermont, Virginia, Washington, West Virginia, Wisconsin, Wyoming, Floating Societies	Canada, England, Hawaii, Mexico, Bermuda, China, Japan, Ireland, India, Micronesian Islands, Spain, Scotland, West Indies, Samoa, Turkey, Africa, Australia
1892	Alabama, Alaska, Arizona, Arkansas, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Dakota, Delaware, District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Idaho, Illinois, Indiana, Indian Territory, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, Vermont, Virginia, Washington, West Virginia, Wisconsin, Wyoming	Canada, Africa, South Australia, New South Wales, New Zealand, Queensland, Tasmania, Victoria, Bermuda, Brazil, Chile, China, England, Floating Societies, India, Ireland, Hawaii, Japan, Madagascar, Mexico, Norway, Persia, Samoa Islands, Sandwich Islands, Scotland, Spain, Turkey, West India
1893	Alabama, Alaska, Arizona, Arkansas, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Dakota, Delaware, District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Idaho, Illinois, Indiana, Indian Territory, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, Vermont, Virginia, Washington, West Virginia, Wisconsin, Wyoming	Africa, Australia, Bermuda, Brazil, Canada, Chile, China, England, India, Ireland, France, Columbia, Japan, Madagascar, Mexico, Norway, Persia, Samoa Islands, Sandwich Islands, Scotland, Spain, Turkey, West Indies

Year	States	Nations
1894	Alabama, Alaska, Arizona, Arkansas, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Idaho, Iowa, Indiana, Illinois, Indian Territory, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Massachusetts, Mississippi, Maryland, Montana, Missouri, Minnesota, Michigan, Nebraska, New Hampshire, Nevada, New York, New Jersey, New Mexico, North Carolina, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, Vermont, Virginia, Washington, West Virginia, Wisconsin	Arica, Australia, Bermuda, Brazil, Canada, Columbia, Chile, China, England, France, India, Ireland, Japan, Madagascar, Mexico, Norway, Persia, Samoan Islands, Sandwich Islands, Scotland, Spain, Syria, Turkey, West Indies, Burma, Siam, Floating Societies
1895	Alabama, Alaska, Arizona, Arkansas, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Idaho, Illinois, Indiana, Indian Territory, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, Vermont, Virginia, Washington, West Virginia, Wisconsin, Wyoming	Africa, Asiatic Turkey, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bermuda, Brazil, Burma, Canada, Chile, Columbia, China, Egypt, England, France, Germany, Hawaii, Holland, India, Ireland, Japan, Laos, Madagascar, Mexico, Norway, Persia, Samoa, Sandwich Islands, Scotland, Siam, South Sea Islands, Spain, Switzerland, Syria, Turkey, Upper Hebrides, Wales, West Indies, Floating Societies
1896	Alabama, Alaska, Arizona, Arkansas, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Idaho, Illinois, Indiana, Indian Territory, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, Vermont, Virginia, Washington, West Virginia, Wisconsin, Wyoming	Africa, Asiatic Turkey, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bermuda, Brazil, Burma, Chile, Columbia, China, Egypt, England and Wales, France, Germany, Guatemala, Hawaii, Holland, India, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Labrador, Laos, Madagascar, Mexico, Norway, Persia, Samoa, Scotland, South Sea Islands, Spain, Siam, Switzerland, Syria, Sweden, Turkey, Upper Hebrides, West Indies, Floating societies

Year	States	Nations
1897	Alabama, Alaska, Arizona, Arkansas, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Idaho, Illinois, Indiana, Indian Territory, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, Vermont, Virginia, Washington, West Virginia, Wisconsin, Wyoming	Africa, Asiatic Turkey, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bermuda, Brazil, British Guiana, Burma, Canada, Chile, Colombia, China, Denmark, Egypt, England, France, Germany, Guatemala, Hawaii, Holland, India, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Labrador, Laos, Madagascar, Mexico, Norway, Persia, Samoa, Scotland, South Sea Islands, Spain, Switzerland, Sweden, Syria, Turkey, Upper Hebrides, Wales, West Indies, Floating Societies
1898	Alabama, Alaska, Arizona, Arkansas, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Idaho, Illinois, Indiana, Indian Territory, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, Vermont, Virginia, Washington, West Virginia, Wisconsin, Wyoming	Africa, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bermuda, Brazil, British Guiana, Burma, Canada, Chile, Colombia, China, Denmark, Egypt, England, France, Germany, Guatemala, Hawaii, Holland, Hungary, India, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Labrador, Laos, Madagascar, Marshall Islands, Mexico, Norway, Persia, Samoa, Scotland, Siam, South Sea Islands, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Syria, Turkey, Upper Hebrides, Wales, West Indies, Floating Societies

Year	States	Nations
1899	Alabama, Alaska, Arizona, Arkansas, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Idaho, Illinois, Indiana, Indian Territory, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, Vermont, Virginia, Washington, West Virginia, Wisconsin, Wyoming	Africa, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bermuda, Brazil, British Guiana, Bulgaria, Burmah, Canada, Chile, China, Colombia, Cuba, Denmark, Egypt, Ellice Islands, England, France, Germany, Gilbert Islands, Guatemala, Hawaii, Holland, Hungary, India, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Labrador, Laos, Madagascar, Marshall Islands, Mexico, Norway, Philippine Islands, Persia, Russia, Samoa, Scotland, Siam, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Syria, Tokelan Islands, Turkey, Upper Hebrides, Wales, West Indies

Clark would travel the world to encourage, promote and support Christian Endeavor. When he would visit a new place, whether in the United States or somewhere else in the world, he often would find Christian Endeavor already there! All types of people from missionaries to sailors to government emissaries would take Christian Endeavor with them. Most of them had participated in Christian Endeavor as an adult leader or a young person. When trained to serve Christ and the church they would see it as a natural progression to start Christian Endeavor wherever they travelled.

These entrepreneurs for Christian Endeavor would not only take it to churches, they followed the pattern of adaptability modeled in the Y.M.C.A.¹⁷³ and adapted it to many different context. There were Christian Endeavor societies in prisons, in the

¹⁷³ Erb, *The Development of the Young People's Movement*. Erb notes the Y.M.C.A. among soldiers, in prisons, on railroads and on college campuses.

military, among policemen, in hospitals among nurses and on boats in Floating Endeavors.¹⁷⁴ Wherever young people were, Christian Endeavor would seem to find its way there too. With its call to organization and action, Christian Endeavor worked to train young people and help people become better Christians.

The innovation of Francis Clark to implement training for young people in the Christian Endeavor Society had taken its first hold in Portland, Maine. It would quickly spread further in a world ready to empower young people. But where did Clark get his ideas? Was this a unique innovation or was it borrowed from somewhere else? Was there something in the innovation that allowed it to become so widespread?

¹⁷⁴ Clark, *Training the Church of the Future; Auburn Seminary Lectures on Christian Nurture with Special Reference to the Young People's Society of Christian Endeavor as a Training-school of the Church.*, 181.

Chapter 5: Influences on Clark

Francis Clark's early life played a big role in his desire to empower young people for Christ. Through the loss of his family when he was young, including the death of his brother, Clark learned the importance of Christian education and the power of faith. Through his uncle and aunt, who adopted him as their own, he learned about the pastorate and caring for others. Through his education he learned to think through his theological convictions, to make learning a life-long pursuit, to write and speak well, and the power of prayer meetings. This diverse upbringing informed his future decisions and his innovation of Christian Endeavor.

Early Life

A lone figure set out in early April 1859 on the long journey from Auburndale, Massachusetts to Aylmer, Canada. While a long trip like this to Canada was not unheard of in these days, the reason for this journey was quite unique. The Reverend Edward Warren Clark was going to find and bring home the only remaining child of his recently deceased sister, as he had promised her he would.¹⁷⁵ Rev. Edward Clark and his wife, Harriet Maria Clark had no children of their own and he was undoubtedly anxious about bringing back this eight-year-old boy whom he hardly knew and whom was still grieving the loss of his mother.

Upon arriving in nearby Ottawa, he quickly went about locating the boy and his

¹⁷⁵ Francis E. Clark, *Memories of Many Men in Many Lands; an Autobiography*, 1922, 32.

deceased family. He writes in his journal,

...I take a special team for Aylmer, paying two dollars, and reach my destination at nine o'clock. Find my dear Sister dead and buried. She sleeps in the Protestant burying ground of Aylmer, by the side of her children. The inscription is as follows:

"My children - Charles Henry Aged 17 years
Edward Carey Aged 17 days
Catharine Noel Aged 4 days
The Lord gave and the Lord hath taketh away.
We shall meet in Heaven."

On her stone was the following:

"The Mother, Lydia F.C. Symmes, Aged 44 years.
They have met.
Her husband is buried at Three Rivers, far away."¹⁷⁶

Having located Francis, Rev. Edward Clark began to make plans to return to Auburndale. The young boy who would leave with him was a good boy, but would surely miss Aylmer and his cousins and friends there. Apparently the memories of his mother and Cherry Cottage were important and strong to Francis. Before leaving he went around hugging and kissing different parts of the house, trees, yard, garden and stones.¹⁷⁷ The memories here were mostly good ones.

Francis Clark's family came from a rich Puritan background. His father, Charles Carey Symmes descended from Zechariah Symmes, one of the early Puritan pastors of Massachusetts Bay, who had come to America on September 18, 1634 on the ship "Griffin".¹⁷⁸ Francis' mother also was born into a Puritan family.

Francis Edward Symmes, Francis Clark's given name, was raised in Aylmer,

¹⁷⁶ Clark and Clark, *A Son's Portrait of Dr. Francis E. Clark.*, 19.

¹⁷⁷ Clark, *Memories of Many Men in Many Lands; an Autobiography*, 32.

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 13.

Canada. His father and mother raised him in a Christian home, prioritizing Scripture and church. His father, Charles Carey Symmes, was away from home when he died of cholera.¹⁷⁹ Francis was not quite three years old when his father passed, so he did not remember his father much at all, although the Puritan background inevitably had an impact on the young boy. His mother, however, had a significant influence on his life, even though she too would pass before Francis was grown.

Lydia Fletcher Clark was a strong woman. All indications are that she was not only strong physically - raising a family and managing the home while her husband was often away, then continuing to run the home after her husband's death - but that she was also strong of will and spirit. She was born into a strong Puritan New England family and was educated by the famous Mary Lyon at the Academy at Ipswich (before the founding of the Mount Holyoke Seminary).¹⁸⁰ Lyon had a significant impact on her life, as demonstrated by Lydia Clark's founding of a small school at Cherry Cottage, her home.¹⁸¹

Mary Lyon is best known for her starting of the Mount Holyoke Seminary, the first permanently endowed institution of higher education for women in America.¹⁸² Lyon is considered a significant contributor to higher education, women's rights and theological education. Mary Lyon was known for her interest in educating young women as teachers, who could then go out and convert more people to Christ through their

¹⁷⁹ Ibid., 14–15.

¹⁸⁰ Clark, *Memories of Many Men in Many Lands : an Autobiography*, 19.

¹⁸¹ Ibid., 21–22.

¹⁸² Andrea Lindsay Turpin and Theological Research Exchange Network, *Training Women in the Service of Christ the Educational Philosophy of Mary Lyon*, 2005, 2.

teaching.¹⁸³ This education got through to Lydia Clark who sought to bring education and evangelism to their small Canadian village. Lyon was largely influenced by the readings and work that flowed out of Jonathan Edwards and his theological viewpoints, ultimately manifesting itself in the “disinterested benevolence” that called for you to sacrifice your own happiness for the greatest good for the whole.¹⁸⁴ Lyon valued education of women as one of the highest priorities. Lydia Clark embodied much of that education, sacrificing self for the good of others. “In Lyon’s view, women would become the cornerstones of a new world order that combined the intense piety of the common folk of New England with the newest advances in historical knowledge and scientific investigation.”¹⁸⁵

While we cannot know exactly how much of an influence this education had directly on young Francis through his mother, we do know that he recognized its impact as he records of his mother in his autobiography, “A second Mt. Holyoke was started in the wilds of Canada... because a spirit kindred to, and the peer of Mary Lyon, presided there.”¹⁸⁶ It would seem at the least that Francis was aware of the importance of education and the value of young people by the time he left Canada.

Francis’ uncle took him back to his home in Auburndale, Massachusetts, where Rev. Clark was pastoring a newly formed Congregational church. There the Rev. Clark and his wife, Mrs. Harriet Maria Clark, worked on raising their newly adopted son. Harriet Clark, was, like Francis, a descendant of the Puritans of Boston, directly related to

¹⁸³ Ibid.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid., 26–27.

¹⁸⁵ Amanda Porterfield, *Mary Lyon and the Mount Holyoke Missionaries*, 1997, 27.

¹⁸⁶ Clark, *Memories of Many Men in Many Lands : an Autobiography*, 22.

John Cotton and Cotton Mather.¹⁸⁷ On August 12, 1859 the Clarks were formalizing the adoption. He was referred to as the “blue-eyed, curly-headed boy, whose bright talk and unselfish ways had made him the pet of the village.”¹⁸⁸ The boy grew up under the ministry and care of his new father. “On March 13, 1863, the final change of name was affected, and Frank Symmes became Frank Clark.”¹⁸⁹

While by all accounts the new home was a good one, Frank’s thoughts returned often to his father, mother, and his older brother, Charles, whom he had loved and lost. His brother had been a strong young man and a model to follow after, assuming the role of “man of the house” after their father had passed away when both were young. The loss of his brother to Typhoid fever at so young of an age and the unfulfilled potential of a life with such promise drove Francis to do well in school and began to mark the way for his awareness of young people and their ability to contribute to society and the church.

While Francis enjoyed his new family, it was not without its transitions and upheaval. After a couple of years in Auburndale, Rev. Edward Clark became ill and took some time off to rest.

When failing health compelled Mr. Clark to relinquish his pastorate, the boy Frank had more of his company and guidance; and how beneficial this was may be gathered from one of Mr. Clark’s saying in his honoured old age: “There is no greater privilege on earth than being permitted to preach the blessed gospel of the Son of God to sinful men. Could the choice be left to me to enter the heavenly rest at once, or spend another fifty years on earth in preaching, in health and strength, I would gladly and eagerly stay and preach the old, old gospel to my fellow-men.”¹⁹⁰

¹⁸⁷ Ibid., 34.

¹⁸⁸ W. Knight Chaplin, *Francis E. Clark : Founder of the Y.P.S.C.E.* (London: A. Melrose, 1900), 7–8.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid., 22.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid., 8–9.

The elder Clark was then elected Overseer of Harvard College. This new position lasted only a short time before Rev. Edward Clark was called to serve as chaplain of Massachusetts Forty-seventh Regiment of Volunteers in the Civil War.¹⁹¹ When his foster-father returned home from his chaplaincy to recover from illness, he recounted to his adopted son stories of the war and explained what warfare meant. This shaped the ideas against war for the young Clark for in later years it became one of the planks of the Christian Endeavor platform.¹⁹² Upon returning from the war, Rev. Edward Clark took a short time to rest and then moved his family to Claremont, New Hampshire, to pastor.

This new family would be quite formative for Frank, especially in matters of faith. He was nurtured and cared for in the parsonage and by the church family surrounding the Clarks. The focus on following Christ, prayer, Scripture, piety and serving in God's kingdom were important in Frank's life. At thirteen, Frank stood up in an ordinary prayer meeting in the Claremont church and confessed his desire to follow Christ.¹⁹³ Membership at his Father's church soon followed on September 3, 1865.¹⁹⁴ It is here that we see the importance of each person's decision to follow and serve Christ was impressed upon Francis Clark's life. Here he also saw the need for Christian nurture, the long-term investment in young people as they grow and develop in thought and faith. "While I believe heartily in revivals, and in many revivalists, and in special periods of religious awakenings, I also believe that there is a place for the Timothy type of

¹⁹¹ Clark and Clark, *A Son's Portrait of Dr. Francis E. Clark*, 25; Chaplin, *Francis E. Clark : Founder of the Y.P.S.C.E.*, 34.

¹⁹² Chaplin, *Francis E. Clark : Founder of the Y.P.S.C.E.*, 9.

¹⁹³ Clark, *Memories of Many Men in Many Lands; an Autobiography*, 38–39.

¹⁹⁴ Chaplin, *Francis E. Clark : Founder of the Y.P.S.C.E.*, 8.

conversion as well as for the Pauline, and that Mother Eunice and Grandmother Lois may be as much used of God in bringing their children to Christ, as the most fiery and eloquent evangelist.”¹⁹⁵

Education

Education was important to the Clark family. Francis’ mother had started a school for the children in the Aylmer area, including of course her own children. Rev. Edward Clark made education a priority for Francis as well, especially in matters of literature. With an eye on attending Dartmouth for college and no adequate preparatory school in Claremont, arrangements were made for Francis to attend Kimball Union Academy where his father had recently been elected trustee.¹⁹⁶

From the trusting home and education of the Clarks, Francis would go on to more formal education. “When little more than sixteen years of age my real academy days were begun, and one cold December day I drove with my adopted father to the hill town of Meriden, N.H., to be entered as a ‘middler’ in famous old Kimball Union Academy, which was then one of the three largest and most important fitting schools in New England, with between three and four hundred students enrolled upon its catalogue.”¹⁹⁷ Kimball Union Academy was known throughout New England for its high standard of scholarship and was at the time one of the largest preparatory schools in New England. Here in a fairly remote location, away from the city Clark was now used to, he would

¹⁹⁵ Clark, *Memories of Many Men in Many Lands; an Autobiography*, 39.

¹⁹⁶ Clark and Clark, *A Son’s Portrait of Dr. Francis E. Clark*, 31.

¹⁹⁷ Clark, *Memories of Many Men in Many Lands; an Autobiography*, 39.

have learned the value of “plain living”, as well as more formal academic subjects like Latin and Greek.¹⁹⁸ Francis was a good student finishing in the top five of his class. Clark graduated from Kimball Union with fifty-five others, of which many joined him in forming “more than a quarter part of the Dartmouth class of ‘73.”¹⁹⁹

Kimball Union had a strong and positive influence on Clark. Years later after becoming President of Christian Endeavor, Clark was appointed President of the Trustees of Kimball Union and gave a speech for the dedication of Dexter Richards Hall at the Academy. He states:

But, once more, the school is great because of the men that it sends out, as well as because of those who enter within its doors. It must send out those who come, to be sure, but it sends them out different men and different women. No boy or girl ever graduated Kimball Union academy the same boy or girl as when entering the junior class. It has put its stamp upon them. It has brought out their genuine earnestness of purpose. It has revealed them to themselves. It has shown them how much they could do, how much of heroism and of genuine, Christlike courage there was within them. In hundreds and hundreds of cases has this been true; and because of this stamp which the school has put upon its pupils does she deserve the honored name which her sons and daughters are glad to give her to-day.²⁰⁰

Upon his graduation at Kimball, Clark took the twelve mile ride to Dartmouth and began his college life there. Dartmouth was a small college at the time and there were several students in Clark’s class “whose virtue was not immaculate.”²⁰¹ But Clark saw the power of God at work through the faculty, curriculum and a significant revival on

¹⁹⁸ Ibid., 40.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid., 41.

²⁰⁰ Kimball Union Academy, *Dedication of Kimball Union Academy: Dexter Richards Hall Opened September 6, 1892, Alumni Exercises Wednesday, June 15, 1892, Meriden, N.H.* (S.l.: s.n.], 1894), 8.

²⁰¹ Clark, *Memories of Many Men in Many Lands; an Autobiography*, 47.

campus during his time there.²⁰² He took pride in going to the “old Dartmouth” where, “men of great hearts, commanding personality, lofty ideals and spotless characters graced the presidential and professorial chairs.”²⁰³ The administration and faculty had a big impact on Clark. Dr. Asa Dodge Smith was the President of Dartmouth and had known Clark as a boy. Dr. Smith had been a pastor and abolitionist and personally prayed that Clark would give his life to the ministry.²⁰⁴ It was also here at Kimball that Clark began to see how faith could be lived out by young people. In the following quote from his autobiography Clark clearly is able to connect some of the theological education and opportunities with the beginnings of the Christian Endeavor Society:

Those were the days of compulsory chapel and compulsory church, which we took for granted as we did the precession of the equinoxes. It never occurred to us that in a well-regulated college anything less could be demanded, while the class prayer meetings, though of course entirely voluntary, were usually attended by fully half of our class, most of whom took part briefly, according to the present Christian Endeavor custom. I am not sure that these class prayer meetings did not give me my first idea of what a church young people’s society might be. At any rate, I know that they were the most stimulating religious feature of my college life, where, with other Christian classmates, I in some way declared myself, week after week, as on the side of Christ.²⁰⁵

While at Dartmouth, Clark would learn and begin to show excellence in both oration and journalism. Journalism was something that Clark seemed to enjoy and was able to do well. His first serious attempts were in the summer of 1872 when he accompanied his father on a trip to New Brunswick, Nova Scotia and Prince Edward’s Island and served as a correspondent for both the *Boston Globe* and the

²⁰² Ibid., 48.

²⁰³ Ibid., 44.

²⁰⁴ Ibid., 45.

²⁰⁵ Ibid., 47.

Congregationalist.²⁰⁶ Clark earned some money doing this and began to excel at writing. Clark was one of the ten editors chosen from the senior class to write for *The Dartmouth*, the college paper.²⁰⁷ Journalism became an important part of Clark's life and became a serious career option, causing him to wrestle with his call to ministry. Journalism tempted Clark as a profession and he expressed his uncertainty that preaching was his future in a letter to his father:

I'm not quite clear in my mind yet, and never have been, *that I ought to go to the seminary at all*. At least I think I could judge much better after a year out of college, and I hope I should be more in the spirit of going then, as I should be. If I wait a year, I shall be less than twenty-six when I get through the seminary, which I am sure is young enough to begin preaching. It is a fact that two thirds of the boys teach or do something else for a year or two after leaving college, before going to the seminary. I think it would be a real and lasting benefit to me to get used to writing, as I should if I get the chance I want. I will send you two or three articles the first of the week, which I will thank you very much to take to the editors.²⁰⁸

Clark used his writing skills to help off-set the costs of schooling, but this was not the only source of funding. Clark's education at Dartmouth was funded in small part by his inheritance from his mother's passing away, as well as the selling of some family land back in Aylmer, Canada. The rest was generally made up by teaching during the break between Thanksgiving and the New Year.²⁰⁹ Clark used the skills he had to his benefit.

Clark was also a gifted public speaker and had many opportunities to practice and grow in this area. Clark was awarded first place his junior year in the annual oratorical

²⁰⁶ Clark and Clark, *A Son's Portrait of Dr. Francis E. Clark.*, 48.

²⁰⁷ Chaplin, *Francis E. Clark : Founder of the Christian Endeavor Society*, 13.

²⁰⁸ Clark and Clark, *A Son's Portrait of Dr. Francis E. Clark.*, 50.

²⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 42.

contest.²¹⁰ His skills in public address would be awarded at his graduation as well.

In 1873 Francis Clark graduated from Dartmouth, and in the graduation exercises he was entrusted with one of the honours of the occasion - the delivery of an oration on the question, 'Ought nations to be governed by the same moral laws as individuals?' Touched already with that ethical enthusiasm which bulked so largely in his life-service, he answered the question in the affirmative - a foreshadowing of the days when he should plead for obedience to Christ's teachings in international relationships, and to lead the Endeavor hosts in protest against oppression and wrong between nation and nation, as well as between man and man.²¹¹

Journalism was not yet an academic discipline with the first school of journalism not to appear until 1908 at the University of Missouri.²¹² Clark's writing all came as an extracurricular activity, but it was clear to him that this field was growing. Nonetheless, Clark decided in the end to pursue his call to ministry.

Clark graduated seventh in his class of eighty-nine. Commencement was held on June 26, 1873.²¹³ There were many good memories and strong relationships built at Dartmouth. Out of his graduating class many were Christians and seventeen became ministers.²¹⁴ This would not be the last time he crossed this platform. Clark would return to Dartmouth in 1888 to receive the first of several honorary degrees, this one a highly prized doctorate of divinity.²¹⁵

Growing in his writing and speaking skills and with a new found passion for

²¹⁰ Chaplin, *Francis E. Clark : Founder of the Christian Endeavor Society*, 13.

²¹¹ *Ibid.*, 15–16.

²¹² Betty Houchin Winfield, *Journalism, 1908 Birth of a Profession* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2008), 1, <http://site.ebrary.com/id/10364861>.

²¹³ Clark and Clark, *A Son's Portrait of Dr. Francis E. Clark.*, 53.

²¹⁴ Chaplin, *Francis E. Clark : Founder of the Christian Endeavor Society*, 11.

²¹⁵ Clark and Clark, *A Son's Portrait of Dr. Francis E. Clark.*, 104.

prayer, Clark embraced his call to full-time ministry. “Also during that summer (1873) the last of the Symmes inheritance in Winchester, Turkey Swamp, was sold for \$600 to meet expenses of the first year at Andover, for in spite of the allurements of journalism the decision had finally been made to go into seminary.”²¹⁶ Clark chose Andover Seminary in Andover, Massachusetts.

Andover Seminary for Theological Education was founded in 1807 by orthodox Calvinists who left Harvard College due to its liberal turn in theological education. Andover was to be a strong theological education in unwavering Calvinism. Before Andover was founded most American Protestant clergy attended undergraduate college then learned the rest of their profession from studying under a minister. Andover was the first to formalize graduate study for clergy in subjects such as: Bible, church history, doctrinal theology and practical ministry.²¹⁷ Clark was delighted with the opportunity to study at Andover and recognized its privileged place in history and in the country. “Andover was then the great theological seminary of New England, as it had been from the beginning, largely because it had been presided over by the greatest theologians of their time, a succession which perhaps reached the climax of its intellectual and spiritual strength in Professors Park and Phelps, who were then the presiding geniuses of the institution.”²¹⁸ Clark attended Andover and began pastoring at a crucial time in the life of the Congregationalist church. During this time romanticism was sweeping through New England challenging the strict logical reasoning of tradition. Bushnell and others were

²¹⁶ Ibid., 55.

²¹⁷ Bendroth, *A School of the Church : Andover Newton Across Two Centuries*, 1–24.

²¹⁸ Clark, *Memories of Many Men in Many Lands; an Autobiography*, 55.

promoting that God worked within nature, while his intentions were still beyond nature. Other factors were also loosening Congregational doctrine, including an increasing emphasis on the freedom of the will, even at Hartford and Andover Seminaries, and general openness to the findings of science.²¹⁹

Of particular influence on Clark while at Andover was the Dr. Edwards Amasa Park. “Dubbed the last ‘consistent Calvinist,’ Park was the final representative and the first major historian of Jonathan Edwards’s living legacy in New England.”²²⁰ Park somehow managed to firmly hold on to and defend the tradition of Calvinism while openly recognizing and formulating the form of “Edwardsean” theology. As Sweeney and Guelzo articulate, “Edwards Amasa Park did more than any other New Englander to synthesize the history of the Edwardsean tradition.”²²¹ Park was a significant force in the New England theological world of the day. He compiled a whole volume on the “Edwardsean theory” of Atonement. In it he proclaimed of “Edwardseans”, “Their *doctrine* of the atonement is essentially the same with that of the elder Calvinists, but their *theory* of the atonement is more harmonious with itself, and with other parts of the evangelical faith; and their mode of expressing their theory is more precise, unequivocal, scientific. In the *substance* they are Calvinistic; in the *form*, they are Edwardsean; hence they have been called Edwardsean Calvinists.”²²² Here we can see the willingness of

²¹⁹ Glenn T. Miller, “The Case of Andover Theological Seminary,” in *Piety and Profession : American Protestant Theological Education, 1870-1970* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Eerdmans Pub., 2007), 136–137.

²²⁰ Douglas A. Sweeney and Allen C. Guelzo, *The New England Theology : from Jonathan Edwards to Edwards Amasa Park* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Academic, 2006), 246.

²²¹ *Ibid.*, 245.

²²² Edwards Amasa Park et al., *The Atonement, Discourses and Treatises* (Boston: Congregational board of publication, 1859), ix–x.

these new theologians to embrace the scientific reason of the day, while still holding as tightly as possible to the Calvinism they inherited. To this end, Park goes on to articulate some differences in this new theory. At the heart of some of the differences in Park's interpretation of "Edwardsean theory" is a shift from limited atonement to general atonement.²²³ While Park was willing to formulate some new "theory" he was quite unwilling to change wholesale on his "doctrine" despite Andover and the general church's shifts. "In the face of his school's marked transition to Progressive Orthodoxy, a more liberal social gospel, higher criticism, and Darwin's evolution, Park stood fast on the old-time gospel of the Edwardsean evangelicals."²²⁴

That Clark was strongly influenced by Park and Andover we have no doubt. The depth of the influence is difficult to fully capture. However, we are able to see a more open view of free will in Clark's Christian Endeavor Society. This showed up in the formation of Christian Endeavor through Clark's commitment that each young person should choose to follow Christ and join Christian Endeavor on his or her own. From the very first society there were options for young people to join as active members, those who were committed to Christ and the Church, and associate members, those who were interested in the activities.²²⁵ The choice was theirs to make. This emphasis on free will also challenged the more conservative Calvinists' view of limited atonement. In allowing for free will, Andover, and Clark following its influence, allowed that Christ's atonement was for all and not just a limited elect.

²²³ Ibid., xivi–xivii.

²²⁴ Sweeney and Guelzo, *The New England Theology: from Jonathan Edwards to Edwards Amasa Park*, 246.

Clark's Calvinist background also showed up in the formation of Christian Endeavor. Andover Theological Seminary was founded in 1807 by orthodox Calvinists who left Harvard College due to its liberal turn in theological education. Andover was to be a strong theological education in unwavering Calvinism.²²⁶ Andover followed the conservative direction and other Congregationalist split forming the American Unitarian Union. As mentioned above, Andover also was allowing room for some new ideas. "The seminary was a staunch advocate of the freedom of the will but still maintained its original purpose of combatting extreme Calvinism and Unitarian tendencies."²²⁷ In Christian Endeavor, Clark made it a point that young people should declare their allegiance to Christ often, making it part of their pledge. This allegiance to Christ, pledged by song, Scripture verse or testimony, demonstrated an awareness of depravity apart from Christ and a dependence on Christ for salvation. As the pledge starts, "Trusting in the Lord Jesus Christ for strength..."

The point of depravity is where Clark's time at Andover with Parks specifically shows through. Andover and Parks were increasingly open to the findings of science.²²⁸ When Clark embraced the teachings of Horace Bushnell and the idea that children could be raised as Christian, this challenged the more conservative Calvinists' view that all people were totally depraved and that all people must first realize this depravity before they can understand the grace given to them in Christ.

²²⁵ Young People's Society of Christian Endeavor, *Model Constitution and By-laws of the Young People's Society of Christian Endeavor* (Toronto: Endeavor Herald, 1898).

²²⁶ Bendroth, *A School of the Church : Andover Newton Across Two Centuries*, 1–24.

²²⁷ Clark and Clark, *A Son's Portrait of Dr. Francis E. Clark.*, 56.

²²⁸ Miller, "The Case of Andover Theological Seminary," 136–137.

It could also easily be seen that Andover and Park had a significant influence on the value of the church in the Christian Endeavor Society which never sought to do anything except strengthen the church everywhere it was implemented. For Congregationalists, and Park, each individual church had the right to govern itself.²²⁹ When Clark started promoting Christian Endeavor, he did not go to denominational leaders (although he would later), but rather to individual church pastors. His Congregationalist influence led him to see the pastor and each church as autonomous and able to choose which ministries to implement. Because of this high value of each individual church, Clark also saw the need for Christian Endeavor to support each local church. Clark also learned through the Congregationalists' history that there is value in unity and organization. Just as the Congregationalists had come together to start Andover, Clark utilized a union model of relationships between societies to organize Christian Endeavor.

Clark received a robust education at Andover, one that taught him to think, to know what he believed and why, and to continue learning. This theological education set a framework upon which Clark would build an organization that could help the church.

Theology was not the only thing that captured Clark's attention at Andover. Clark also found ways to serve the church and young people. "Besides working hard at the seminary, where he left a creditable record, he gave a good deal of time and energy to a mission Sunday school, in which he discovered and proved his power to win and help young people. Many who were members of his large class gratefully remember the help the earnest young student gave them at his Saturday evening prayer-meetings, and the

²²⁹ Sweeney and Guelzo, *The New England Theology : from Jonathan Edwards to Edwards Amasa Park*.

Sunday afternoon Bible classes with which he was especially concerned.”²³⁰ Clark, even early in his ministry, prioritized young people and prayer.

Upon graduation from seminary, in 1876 Francis E. Clark married “a bright, vivacious, enthusiastic young lady of honourable New England descent,” Harriet Abbott.²³¹ The two had met while both were volunteering their services at a mission Sunday School. The newlyweds accepted a call to pastor a young congregation in Williston, Massachusetts. No one could have known or predicted the success of this young pastor in his own parish, or in helping start a movement that would sweep the world.

The rhythms and influences of young people were changing in the late 1800’s. Churches all over the world were desperately trying to figure out what was going on and what to do about it. There were many attempts at organizations, societies, groups and clubs aimed at this problem. None seemed to hit the mark in a sustainable way. Then in 1881 a young pastor of a small church in Portland, Maine began the first Young Person’s Society of Christian Endeavor. Unbeknownst to anyone involved, from these humble beginnings would grow a movement that would reach around the world. Francis Edward Clark began the Christian Endeavor Society because he saw a need for connecting young people who were between Sunday School and church membership to be valued, given responsibility and trained for the sake of Christ and the Church.

Valuing Young People

The changing culture of the late 1800’s along with the church’s limited view of

²³⁰ Chaplin, *Francis E. Clark : Founder of the Christian Endeavor Society*, 16.

²³¹ Ibid.

young people lead to apathy, disinterest and rejection of the church. The issue was not limited to Clark's church or the region. It was an issue for the whole church. Seeing the youth problem within his own church, as well as in the church at large, Clark was quite aware something had to be done.

In wrestling with this youth problem, Clark was significantly influenced by what he saw in Scripture as an explicit valuing of children. For Clark, Christ and Scripture called for the church to prioritize children and to see their training as one of the church's primary purposes. This represents a significant shift in the mindset of the American church especially as it dealt with these older "children" (who we now refer to as teenagers).

Clark's first book, *The Children and The Church*, is a treatise on the importance of valuing young people within the church. He clearly believed that the Scriptures showed that God speaks to children.²³² For Clark, a child's interest and pursuit of the Christian life is a natural thing. He was particularly disturbed by the prevailing view that all young people must go through a "bad spell". "A religious life, a life of faith and prayer, a Christ-like life, is natural for a child, and we make a woeful mistake when we think that there is a certain amount of boyish wickedness and girlish frivolity which must be run through before the religious life can begin."²³³ Clark did not think this Christian life could be developed on a child's own; he saw the importance and value of adults investing in them. "But this early religious life, we must remember, does not take care of itself, any more than a rosebud springs up out of the ground without care; the soil must be

²³² Clark, *The Children and the Church, and the Young People's Society of Christian Endeavor, as a Means of Bringing Them Together.*, 11–12.

²³³ Ibid., 13.

prepared, the seed must be dropped, the little plant must be watered and nourished and pruned and trained.”²³⁴ Clark saw this nurturing and development as the role of the parents and the church.

In addition Clark believed that children could understand and make a choice to follow Christ. “...we believe an ordinary child of eight or ten years can understand just as well what conversion means, as a practical matter that concerns himself, as the most hoary sinner to whom the Spirit ever spoke.”²³⁵ He turns to Scripture for support, “Where, in the word of God, do we find any age limitation to the work of conversion? Surely, if there were any such limitation, it would be mentioned.”²³⁶ Children should be allowed to express this within the normal functions of the church. “When the child gives good evidence of conversion, there ought to be no barrier between him and the communion table of his dying Lord.”²³⁷ Clark also recognized that a good portion of the people who were Christians in the church had come to Christ at a young age. “Most persons who are converted to Christ are converted in early life. All religious statistics bear out this statement; and yet, with this undisputed truth staring him in the face, the Christian often tries to turn the soul to God only after it has become old and hardened and unimpressionable.”²³⁸ Clark called for an embrace of this age group within the church.

Because he valued young people in this way, Clark became convinced that they could and should become members of the church. Again his son records from Dr. Clark’s

²³⁴ Ibid., 14.

²³⁵ Ibid., 20.

²³⁶ Ibid., 30.

²³⁷ Ibid., 21.

²³⁸ Ibid., 27.

journal,

There is no reason in my judgment why thirty or forty of them (young people) should not come into the church the first of May, but I find an unaccountable indifference and reluctance on the part of the parents to their joining the church and I am afraid I shall receive but few of them. Their parents acknowledge that they are different from what they were, and they think they are converted, but will not encourage, or even allow them, in some cases, to go any further. It is very disheartening to find them so, and I am almost indignant sometimes.²³⁹

Clark saw from Scripture many visions of the full body of Christ in God's kingdom, including children. "...it will be just as much expected that many young children will form part of the membership of every church as that there will be gray-haired men and women there."²⁴⁰ This became a significant issue in the church. Clark often said, "Give young Christians a task! Call them to serve! Encourage them! They will give you their best."²⁴¹

There were two significant influences on Clark around this time that lead to his invention of the Christian Endeavor Society: Horace Bushnell and his work on Christian nurture, and Theodore Cuyler a Brooklyn pastor who had begun experimenting with a young person's society. These two influences are clearly reflected in Clark's writings and thoughts. However, Clark was able to add one additional piece to these influences to bring the Christian Endeavor Society to fruition and sustainability: training.

Bushnell

One of the significant theological issues of the day was the argument between process and instantaneous salvation. Clark saw this to be uniquely tied to the issue of

²³⁹ Clark and Clark, *A Son's Portrait of Dr. Francis E. Clark.*, 79.

²⁴⁰ Clark, *The Children and the Church, and the Young People's Society of Christian Endeavor, as a Means of Bringing Them Together.*, 18.

children within the church. In his lecture at Auburn Seminary on this issue, Clark notes that the pendulum has been swung towards the idea of “conquest” and revivalism.²⁴² Clark does his best to argue for the relevance of both realities, but in terms of children, he sees the importance of developing a child over the long haul in the community of the church. “The doctrines of conversion, conviction of sin, and regeneration have been monstrously perverted when they have been made to teach that in every case, whatever the natural disposition or early training, there must be a sudden, conscious, terrible wrench from old ways of living; for it shuts out all childish conversions, and makes a youth of sin indispensable to an old age of godliness.”²⁴³ For Clark the process can and should begin in the home and the church. He states:

It is natural, it is possible, it is desirable for children to grow up into Christian manhood and womanhood without experiencing any sharp and sudden transition from an evil life to a good life. Nay, it is not only possible and desirable, it is the thing we ought to expect; it ought to be as common for young children to be born into the kingdom of God as to be born into the world. It is possible and natural for children to be converted at their mothers’ knee, and never know the time when they did not love the Savior. And this should not be something rare, occasional, remarkable, a phenomenon, a thing to excite remark, like a comet or a meteor. It should be the usual expected thing that children of religious parents should choose to live for the Saviour as early as they are able to make any choice, and should be received into the church and receive its nurturing, fostering care.²⁴⁴

Horace Bushnell’s contribution to the church’s ministry to children and young people is significant and well noted. While Bushnell’s writings on Christian nurture were

²⁴¹ Pagel, Arno, *Worldwide Christian Endeavor* (Columbus, Ohio: World’s Christian Endeavor Union, 1981), 8.

²⁴² Clark, *Training the Church of the Future; Auburn Seminary Lectures on Christian Nurture with Special Reference to the Young People’s Society of Christian Endeavor as a Training-school of the Church*, 15.

²⁴³ Clark, *The Children and the Church, and the Young People’s Society of Christian Endeavor, as a Means of Bringing Them Together*, 16.

²⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 15.

almost forty years old by the time Clark took the pastorate in Portland, they were still under intense scrutiny and the topic of much debate. Clark saw them as quite helpful in arguing for a solution to the current problem and embracing the value of children within the church. “With the advent of Bushnell and his theories, the attention of the church was called, as never before to the supreme importance of Christian nurture, and it was seen that, whatever the conquest might be from without, there must also be growth from within if the church was to hold its own and retain the allegiance and loyalty of those who naturally belonged to it.”²⁴⁵ Clark expanded Bushnell’s theories beyond just the family and into the realm of the responsibility of the church. Clark,

stressed the role of prayer in the spiritual lives of the congregation. For both, prayer was associated with Christian conversion and revivals of religion. While these convictions ignored Horace Bushnell’s idea of Christian nurture in the home, Clark would alter incorporate a modified idea of nurture into his writings that promoted the Society of Christian Endeavor. From the beginning of his pastoral ministry, he saw the faith community, the local church, as an agency of Christian nurture.²⁴⁶

It must be noted that Bushnell’s ideas on nurture were seen by many as a rebellion against the Calvinist view of predestination and an affirmation of free will. Clark the Congregationalist would have agreed with this, but had to be willing to change in his embrace of Christian nurture.

Theodore Cuyler

The other person who had a significant impact on Clark at this point was Theodore Cuyler. In speaking of Dr. Cuyler’s attempt to deal with the youth problem

²⁴⁵ Clark, *Training the Church of the Future; Auburn Seminary Lectures on Christian Nurture with Special Reference to the Young People’s Society of Christian Endeavor as a Training-school of the Church*, 15–16.

²⁴⁶ Senter, *When God Shows Up: A History of Protestant Youth Ministry in America*, 143–144.

Clark notes, “In many churches, too, conspicuously in the Lafayette Avenue Church of Brooklyn, of which the honored Dr. Cuyler was pastor, were strong and vigorous young people’s associations which, though they did not have the distinguishing characteristics of the Christian Endeavor Society of to-day, nevertheless accustomed the mind of the Christian public to the idea of organized activity among the young people of the churches.”²⁴⁷ In his first full account of the formation of the Christian Endeavor Society, Clark gives credit to Cuyler as an influence. “Stimulated and guided by an article of Dr. Cuyler’s concerning a young people’s association in his church, I asked the young Christians to my house to consider the formation of a society for Christian work.”²⁴⁸ The main influence of Dr. Cuyler was that it was possible to organize and challenge young people to be involved in the ministry of the church.

Training

Despite these two major influences on Dr. Clark, there was still something missing. He recognized that there had to be another piece for this to work. Others had tried emphasizing nurture and involvement, but none had sustained success.

As has been mentioned Clark recognized that there was a youth problem. He also was growing in his appreciation for the idea of the church’s role in nurturing young people and challenging them to faith and participation in life of the church. At this point he added one more factor which would end up driving the success of his group and those that would follow: training.

²⁴⁷ Clark, *World Wide Endeavor : the Story of the Young People’s Society of Christian Endeavor, from the Beginning and in All Lands*, 44.

²⁴⁸ Clark, *The Children and the Church, and the Young People’s Society of Christian Endeavor, as a Means of Bringing Them Together.*, 34.

Clark recognized that other organizations were trying to address this problem and not having success. In his own reflection, "It is noticeable that in these former organizations and methods of training the young people, one element was largely left out - the element of training, of personal exercise. If you will examine carefully all these plans...you will notice that, almost without exception, the teaching element predominated. It entirely overshadowed, if it did not absolutely displace, the idea of training."²⁴⁹ Clark himself is not sure where this addition came from. "In the providence of God, as it seems to me, without human design or intention and with very little human wisdom, the Christian Endeavor Society came to remedy this defect and provide the all important element of training - to exalt it side by side with the idea of instruction in all our churches."²⁵⁰ The addition of this training piece and the accountability it provided proved to be successful. Erb's broader focus on young people's movements provides some insight:

The committee work placed on the young people definite responsibility for other things besides testimony in prayer-meeting; it presented a task which to these ardent souls so long shut out from any active participation in church work seemed abundantly worthy. Up to this time the endeavor in the churches had frequently been to attract young people by making as little demand as possible. The new society reversed this procedure, and the young people proved themselves efficient and trustworthy.²⁵¹

The American Protestant church of the late 1800's had a problem. Just as the young people of the church were reaching a critical age of in-between Sunday School and church membership, they were experiencing an increasing menu of entertainment options

²⁴⁹ Clark, *Training the Church of the Future; Auburn Seminary Lectures on Christian Nurture with Special Reference to the Young People's Society of Christian Endeavor as a Training-school of the Church*, 86.

²⁵⁰ Ibid., 87.

²⁵¹ Erb, *The Development of the Young People's Movement*, 54.

in culture at large. The result was a decrease in Christian faith and church involvement by the young people of the time. Through a commitment to valuing young people, influences from Horace Bushnell and Theodore Cuyler, and adding an emphasis on training, Francis Clark was able to birth the Christian Endeavor Society which provided a solution to the youth problem for both his church and the church at large in the United States and eventually the world.

A few themes have come up in this examination of the theological influences on Clark. First, there are obvious and strong ties to Puritanism throughout Clark's life and in his expression of the Christian Endeavor. Second, the Congregationalist view of theology and church seem to be woven throughout Clark's life and ministry. Third, the high value on education and the value it both recognizes in and gives to people is important. What then are the direct influences of these themes on the development of the Christian Endeavor Society?

From his early days with his mother through his time spent with his adopted parents, education was important. Clark made sure to make this a facet of the *Model Constitution and By-laws of the Young People's Society of Christian Endeavor*, through the inclusion of the "Good Literature Committee" in its bylaws whose duty it was to "promote the reading of good books and papers."²⁵² While inherently religious in its focus, the presence of this committee along with the Sunday School committee shows a recognition of the importance of continual learning and self-education.

Clark spent most of his young life immersed in a Puritan movement that

²⁵² Endeavor, *Model Constitution and By-laws of the Young People's Society of Christian Endeavor*, 15.

embraced temperance in all things. This focus on piety and the process of encouraging that was captured by Clark in his “Temperance Committee” and his strong stance throughout the Constitution that young people can and will be expected to hold to these standards.²⁵³

At the center of the Christian Endeavor Society was the role of the Prayer Meeting and the commitment of all active members to attend and participate in every one.²⁵⁴ This Clark clearly gleaned from his time at Dartmouth. Clark saw the value in not just having a prayer meeting for young people, but in making sure they took ownership and were actively involved in it.

From his time at Andover and with Dr. Park, he clearly gained, if it was not already there, a high value of the church. Article IX is titled, “Relation to the Church” and clearly points out that all Christian Endeavor Societies are part of their local church body with pastors and church leaders as honorary members available to the young people for advice and wisdom. Also from his time at Andover, Clark seems to have caught on to the idea that people must choose for themselves to engage in following Christ. To this end, Clark implemented a two-tiered membership. The active role is for those fully committed to Christ and the church and willing to participate in all activities, especially the weekly prayer meeting. The associate role is for those interested in coming to the activities, but not necessarily willing, yet, to actively participate in the organization of activities or the weekly prayer meeting.²⁵⁵ This allowed for young people to choose first,

²⁵³ Ibid., 14–15.

²⁵⁴ Ibid., 7.

²⁵⁵ Ibid., 3.

to be a part of the community and second, to make their faith an active part of their lives.

Clark's theological influences from his early days throughout his education played an important role in his development of the Christian Endeavor Society and its practices. Understanding Clark's background and influences helps us see where the ideas for Christian Endeavor took root. Out of this rich soil, Clark grew an organization rooted in support for Christ and the Church above all else. It can also be seen that Clark's education in speaking and writing would be priceless as Christian Endeavor grew. But Clark's small organization in Portland, Maine, was not the only attempt by churches to reach the young. How did the Christian Endeavor Society grow? What helped it spread so quickly?

Part 2: Factors Leading to the Success and Influence of Christian Endeavor

Part two examines the three major factors that allowed Francis Clark and Christian Endeavor to have such wide-sweeping global impact on the Protestant Church: written communication, global travel and organization.

Chapter 6: Written Communication

One of the keys to the growth of Christian Endeavor was Clark's ability to communicate with people about it. He utilized the growing medium of print to great effect. Through his books, the *Christian Endeavor World* (formerly *The Golden Rule*), and articles in other publications, Clark communicated the vision and mission of Christian Endeavor while also sharing best practices for local societies.

As the American economy began to grow, schooling became more prominent and technology eased the cost and difficulty of publishing, reading began to take a significant place in the lives of people. "Reading played a very prominent role in the lives of most Americans in the Gilded Age. ...reading material was the only mass medium and a vital leisure activity."²⁵⁶ The volume of printed material increased as did the options for reading material.

²⁵⁶ Joel Shrock, *The Gilded Age* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 2004), 151.

This increase in printed material started with some significant changes to the technology of printing and extended through the desire to communicate the ideals of an organizational era. John Shrock records the transformation of the industry in his book on *The Gilded Age*:

The print industry underwent changes that revolutionized print culture through standardization of production, increased efficiency, and large bureaucratic structures, which produced a mass market. While the first half of the nineteenth century had been characterized by a scarcity of published reading material, the second half of the century witnessed a massive growth in printed material. The expansion of distribution networks such as railroads, postal subscriptions, and mail order catalogs vastly increase the ability of all Americans to receive printed material. Accompanying this was an increase in the amount of printed matter available to Americans in the Gilded Age; the new books published grew by 300 percent between 1880 and 1900. There was a corresponding growth in newspaper, which experienced a 700 percent increase in circulation between 1870 and 1900.²⁵⁷

Not only was a mass market being created, there were finally ways to print and deliver the supply to meet the demand. The five changes in technology that led to faster printing, lower costs and greater accessibility were: the webfed rotary press, electrically run machinery, woodbased white paper, typesetting machines, and halftone engraving.²⁵⁸ In particular the decrease in paper costs was significant. While this did not grow circulation, it did lower the cost of purchase significantly, thus making papers more affordable for the general public.

Another development during this time that led to lower costs for the consumer and greater profits for the publisher was the increase in advertising. By 1890 most papers realized close to 50 percent of their income from advertising.²⁵⁹ This significantly

²⁵⁷ Ibid.

²⁵⁸ Ted Curtis Smythe, *The Gilded Age Press, 1865-1900* (Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 2003), 123.

²⁵⁹ Ibid., 56.

decreased the burden of subscription costs on the income of the papers and therefore lowered the cost to consumer.

Publishing magazines and papers specifically aimed at young people also became successful. “Particularly important leaders in respectable middle-class magazines were the *Youth’s Companion*, with its behemoth circulation of 500,000 in 1900...”²⁶⁰ The effectiveness of these papers and of publishing in general was not lost on Clark.

The beginning of the Gilded Age saw a boom in religious publications as well. The number of religious papers leveled off after an initial explosion of growth, but like the public papers’ circulation continued to increase. In 1890 there were 1,191 religious papers throughout the United States. By 1895 those numbers had dropped slightly to 1,187. However, the number of circulations increased from almost nine million (8,904,628) in 1890 to almost fifteen million (14,915,921) in 1895.²⁶¹ Clark’s paper *The Golden Rule* (which became *Christian Endeavor World*) benefited from these opportunities and was a model example of growth in circulation and impact.

The expansion of the railroad and the telegraph also assisted in the growth of the weeklies. The telegraph lines largely followed the expansion of the railroad with the exception of connecting urban centers to suburban areas. “Reporters who covered the suburbs, or traveled throughout the states, used the telegraph to send news to the office. Editors used it to control their movements.”²⁶² The increased availability of communication was helpful in allowing information such as articles to come to the main

²⁶⁰ Shrock, *The Gilded Age*, 165.

²⁶¹ Batten, *Directory of the Religious Press of the United States*; George Batten Company, *Directory of the Religious Press of the United States ...* (New York: G. Batten & Co., 1897).

²⁶² Smythe, *The Gilded Age Press, 1865-1900*, 203.

publishing centers from faraway places.

Into this growing field of writing and publishing, a young pastor with some journalism training and a propensity to write leapt. Francis Clark, always a writer, now had a story to tell, a vision to share and the means to communicate. Clark was able to build on his journalism experience to connect with newspapers and magazines to promote the new society. Through this medium Clark stumbled on one of the great diffusion devices of the age.

Francis Clark always liked to write. During college, as mentioned above, he wrestled for a while with writing as an alternate vocation. He understood his own proclivity toward writing. “We read of people who are born with silver spoons in their mouths. It is equally apposite to speak of other people who were born with a pen between their fingers. Without intending to boast at all of literary achievements, I think I may claim to belong to the latter class, certainly not of the former. I cannot remember a time when I did not like to write if I had anything to write about.”²⁶³ His first book, *The Life of William E. Harward*, was written in 1879 while he was still at Andover.²⁶⁴ It turns out that Clark had an enormous amount of things to write about, starting with the Christian Endeavor Society. “The journalistic urge was in constant evidence. Mr. Clark seems never to have been happier than when he had a pen in hand. In 1884 arrangements were made to write regularly for *The Christian Work*, *Illustrated Christian Weekly Messenger*, *Homiletic Monthly*, *Pulpit Treasury*, and *Wellspring*.”²⁶⁵

²⁶³ Clark, *Memories of Many Men in Many Lands; an Autobiography*, 670.

²⁶⁴ Clark and Clark, *A Son's Portrait of Dr. Francis E. Clark.*, 85.

²⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 93.

Clark, the writer, did what he had a desire and outlet to do: tell people about the success of the Christian Endeavor Society in his own church. He had an awareness that other churches and pastors were trying to reach young people as well so he shared his idea and the early results. Clark wrote an article about the Christian Endeavor society entitled, “How One Church Looks After Its Young People”, that appeared in *The Congregationalist* newspaper. “This article, which was merely a brief description of the methods and plans of the Society of Christian Endeavor, now so well known, brought me an unexpected correspondence. I expected to hear no more from this than from any other newspaper article; and, as every writer knows, that is usually very little. But this article seemed to be on a subject which was exercising the minds of many.”²⁶⁶ The article was reprinted in *The Sunday-School Times*. “So many were the requests for information that I was soon found necessary to print with a gelantine pad some copies of the constitution which the Williston Society had adopted, to send to inquiring friends.”²⁶⁷ The article and its reprint grabbed the attention of many.

In October 1881 North Church in Newburyport, Massachusetts formed the second society. Rev. Charles Perry Mills in his first year at North Church had seen his young people experience a revival with many conversions, much like had happened at Williston, and adopted Christian Endeavor as soon as he heard about it.²⁶⁸ Newburyport was the first to “second the motion” of Christian Endeavor, but the article Clark wrote reached even further. As W. Knight Chaplin records in his biography, *Francis E. Clark: Founder*

²⁶⁶ Clark, *Christian Endeavor in All Lands*, 53–54.

²⁶⁷ Ibid., 54.

²⁶⁸ Ibid., 57.

of the Christian Endeavor Society,

... a pastor in Honolulu placed in his scrap-book an article by Dr. Clark, entitled "How One Church takes care of its Young People." This article led the pastor to think that a Christian Endeavor Society would be a good thing for his Church. It was started, and a scrap-book article had led to it. These Honolulu Endeavorers often had passing travelers of different nationalities visiting their meetings, and they in turn carried the seeds of Christian Endeavor to many other places.²⁶⁹

Clark was overwhelmed with requests for more information. A year after the formation of the first society, Clark recorded in his journal, "It does take a good deal of time to answer all the letters about the Young People's Society but I think it pays. It seems to me I can do more good by working up this method of Christian nurture for the young than in any other way. I am almost ashamed to write so much for the papers about it but I feel the importance of the subject exceedingly."²⁷⁰ After the second society formed, Clark reports,

Demands upon the parent society and its pastor for information concerning the work became more and more numerous. A private bureau of information was practically established, whose expense was largely divided between Mr. W.H. Pennell, the first signer of the constitution, and the pastor. The constitution was printed, and one or two leaflets were prepared to save busy men the labor of an overburdening correspondence.²⁷¹

These leaflets, copies of the constitution and a few other documents were copied and sent to those with interest.

An example of the written communication that was copied and sent out to those interested parties would be the "report" from the first convention from June of 1882:

First Report

²⁶⁹ Chaplin, *Francis E. Clark : Founder of the Christian Endeavor Society*, 49.

²⁷⁰ Clark and Clark, *A Son's Portrait of Dr. Francis E. Clark.*, 80.

²⁷¹ Clark, *Christian Endeavor in All Lands*, 58.

Society of Christian Endeavor.

Portland, Maine, 1882.

Dear Brother: - Last June a permanent organization of the various societies of Christian Endeavor was effected in Williston church, Portland, and a yearly conference of the societies was provided for, in the hope that systematic effort for the conversion of the young might be thereby promoted. So many inquiries from various quarters have been received concerning this work that we take the liberty of sending you this circular, suggesting some practical methods of Christian nurture adopted by "The Young People's Society of Christian Endeavor," thinking you may possibly desire to adopt in your own church, either this same agency, or some similar plan, so that being united in the same work we might all labor together more efficiently for the conversion and training of the young.

We do not claim to have conceived a perfect plan of Christian culture, or one that will succeed without constant labor and earnest prayer. We only offer one method of setting young Christians at work while their souls are all alive with love for Jesus, and when perhaps the doors of some churches might be closed to them on account of their age.

There is a well-considered plan of work embraced in the inclosed (sic) constitution, to which each member signs his name upon joining the society. To guard against the admission of unworthy or thoughtless young people, who have no real desire to lead a Christian life, it should be provided that each one must be proposed one week in advance of his becoming a member, and the Lookout Committee (a most necessary factor in the work) must be sure that the candidate understands the strict requirements of the constitution which he signs, and is really in earnest to begin a higher life. When admitted he enters at once upon the work of enlisting other young people, - his associates, - in the service of his Lord and Master.

The weekly prayer-meeting, led and controlled by the members, gives each one an opportunity to express his feelings, for at these meetings "every active member is expected to take *some* part." This he promises to do when he signs the constitution.

The official work is divided between the Prayer Meeting Committee, the Lookout Committee, and the Social Committee. These, if composed of devoted Christians, will make these societies nurseries of the church indeed, for it is ever held up to be the end and aim of all training, to become members of some church of Christ.

It has not been found necessary to wait for large numbers before establishing a society. Two or three faithful and persevering disciples may begin a work that will eventually bring many of their young companions to Christ, and greatly strengthen the church.

One society in this city, organized by a very few members, has been the means, under God, of bringing into the church eighty young men and women, within a few months, when there had been no additions before for two years. This is not an exceptional case, for wherever these societies have been organized, the young people have shown a remarkable readiness to assume active Christian duties and church fellowship.

We desire to present this subject to you for your prayerful consideration, and if any other is desired we shall be glad to furnish it, or to assist in any way in establishing similar societies.

If this method of work commends itself to you, and you decide to form such a society, or have already established such an organization, we hope we may hear from you, that we may occasionally exchange circular letters, and receive from you suggestions as to the best practical method of work, and above all, that we may all unite our efforts and our prayers in this work for our common Master.

Fraternally yours,
W.H. Pennell, President
J.W. Stevenson, Secretary
Rev. F.E. Clark
Rev. C.A. Dickinson } Ex. Comm.
H.H. Burgess

Communications may be addressed to either of the officers or committee.²⁷²

Within the first year three or four societies were added. In 1882, to add support to the ideas and sparse leaflets about Christian Endeavor, Clark wrote and published the book, *The Children and the Church: And the Young Person's Society of Christian Endeavor As A Means of Bringing Them Together*. The effectiveness of written communication and the interest in Christian Endeavor were growing.

As Christian Endeavor grew, Clark and the other leaders realized the need for a publication of their own. The idea of starting a paper for the Society was formally presented in the President's address at the fourth convention by then President Van Patten. Two years later the dream became a reality. Van Patten reported in his President's report

²⁷² Francis Edward Clark et al., "First Convention Report Letter," 1882.

at the 6th convention,

For the past three years the importance of having some periodical that should adequately represent the Christian Endeavor movement, its aims, its methods, and its necessities, has been a subject discussed in all our meetings. Its establishment was longed for, but never accomplished because the United Society never had the funds necessary to do it. But those active promoters of our work, Mr. Clark, Mr. Dickinson, Mr. Hill, and other friends, decided that it would not do to wait longer, but what could not be done by the society must be done by private enterprise. And so, having opportunity to secure control of *The Golden Rule* which had already been to some extent identified with us, they bravely undertook the task of establishing a Christian Endeavor paper.²⁷³

At that same convention Clark was elected President of Christian Endeavor and “Mr. Clark was named the first editor-in-chief of the paper. Its name was subsequently changed to *The Christian Endeavor World*, and it attained a circulation of nearly 100,000.”²⁷⁴ The new paper grew a large audience that coincided with the growth of the movement.

An Editor-in-Chief of the *Christian Endeavor World*, formerly the *Golden Rule*, he had for many years the responsibility of conducting an important weekly organ. How ably he guided it may be gauged from the fact that the official organ of Christian Endeavor became, in the course of years, one of the most popular and successful of the religious weeklies in America... It is not too much to say that Dr. Clark’s literary and journalistic work was one of the prime factors in the progress of the movement.²⁷⁵

The paper became a vehicle for Clark to do what he seemed to care for most: help the church. It became a weekly source of encouragement and support, a gathering of best practices, and a reminder for Christian Endeavorers that they were not alone.

The Golden Rule in 1892 had a circulation of 70,000 in the United States with

²⁷³ *Sixth Annual Conference of the Young People’s Society of Christian Endeavor: Held at Saratoga Springs, N.Y., July 5, 6, and 7, 1887, with Papers at the Conference*, 43.

²⁷⁴ Clark and Clark, *A Son’s Portrait of Dr. Francis E. Clark*, 99. This is a direct quote from the convention, however, official circulation reports actually have the circulation at 106,000.

²⁷⁵ Chaplin, *Francis E. Clark : Founder of the Y.P.S.C.E.*, 125.

only three other religious weeklies with a larger circulation. By 1896 the circulation of the paper had grown to 106,000 and it remained in the top four Christian weekly papers in the United States.²⁷⁶ The effectiveness of the paper of meeting a need in the church was without question. This growing circulation also led to further spread of Christian Endeavor Societies.

The growth of the movement continued. Clark realized very quickly that this manner of “preaching” was effectively a missionary work. Speaking about his first year of Presidency and the issue of handling growth,

There was only one thing to do, and that was to thank God for Guttenberg and the printing-press, and make the most of the printer’s ink. This has been done to the best of our ability; much thought and much time have been put into these publications, and, as a result, in part at least, of those labors, two thousand five hundred and seventy-three societies have been added to the previously long list, and increase in one year of over one hundred per cent. This method of preaching by the use of “white paper and black type” has the advantage of being accurate, swift, capable of reaching an universal audience, and being comparatively inexpensive. One of these missionaries can be equipped and sent, at a moment’s notice, to California for two cents, to China for five cents, or to South Africa or Australia for another nickel. These silent missionaries have been nine in number and have been called THE GOLDEN RULE.²⁷⁷

Clark was able to utilize this new method of mass media to inform and transform churches and their ministry to young people all over the world.

Clark was an excellent writer and this helped the paper gain readership and Christian Endeavor to gain a following. “Partly because he was personally acquainted with so many of those for whom he wrote, and partly because of the intense earnestness

²⁷⁶ Batten, *Directory of the Religious Press of the United States*; George Batten Company, *Directory of the Religious Press of the United States* ...

²⁷⁷ *Seventh Annual Conference of the Young People’s Society of Christian Endeavor: Held in Battery D Armory, Chicago, Ill., Thursday, Friday, Saturday, and Sunday, July 5,6,7 and 8, 1888, with Papers Read at the Conference* (Boston, MA: The United Society of Christian Endeavor, 1888), 51.

and transparent sincerity of the writer, his books make the reader feel as if he had been admitted by special favour to the friendship of the author...²⁷⁸ In the paper Clark would often write several articles and in the beginning would write the editorial responses to letters. However, his pastoral tone seemed to win people over.

One of the ways in which Dr. Clark's fluent pen was most serviceable was in the weekly inditing (sic) of a "Familiar Letter" to the readers of the *Christian Endeavor World*. Sometimes a chatty account of some great Convention; sometimes an echo of work or experience; sometimes a stirring call to some one of the forward and upward steps which "Father Endeavor Clark" from time to time advocated by tongue and pen; sometimes, and most frequently, a heart-to-heart talk about the deepest things.²⁷⁹

This kind of connection became important for Clark as he travelled and assisted with Christian Endeavor conventions.

Clark started to realize his effectiveness as a writer in college, paying for some of his schooling through journalism. Clark financed his summer travels during seminary through his writing, serving as a newspaper correspondent, receiving payment from newspapers as well as a transportation pass for journalists.²⁸⁰ Because he enjoyed it and he realized it was an effective way to communicate, Clark wrote... a lot.

In looking back at his writing towards the end of his life, Clark notes

For more than thirty-five years I have contributed one or more articles and editorials to the Christian Endeavor weekly before mentioned, at least an average of two a week. In the early days of the paper, when I was more responsible for its contents than now, I used to contribute five or six articles, longer or shorter to each issue. When I count up the appalling total of two articles a week for thirty-five years, and fifty-two weeks in the year, I find that the number of contributions amounts to more than 3,600. At least a third as many more must have appeared in other publications of which I can recall at least a score, like *The*

²⁷⁸ Chaplin, *Francis E. Clark : Founder of the Y.P.S.C.E.*, 129.

²⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 127.

²⁸⁰ Clark and Clark, *A Son's Portrait of Dr. Francis E. Clark.*, 62.

Christian Herald, The Youth's Companion, and most of the leading denominational papers of American Protestantism.²⁸¹

Clark not only wrote a lot of material, but his writings also covered a large range of styles and topics. He wrote training materials for Christian Endeavor detailing organization and history.²⁸² He wrote collections of Christian Endeavor stories highlighting some of the “heroes” of the organizations history.²⁸³ He also wrote devotional books to support Christian Endeavors emphasis on Scripture reading and prayer.²⁸⁴ He wrote an autobiography at the end of his life, *Memories of Many Men in Many Lands*.²⁸⁵ In books such as *The Kingdom Within*, he wrote and compiled books that were “selections” from Christian exemplars to help expose young people to a wider range of Christian literature and thoughts.²⁸⁶ He wrote largely about and for Christian Endeavor, but not exclusively. From his travels he recorded travel logs which were widely popular in the United States including *Our Journey Around the World* which went

²⁸¹ Clark, *Memories of Many Men in Many Lands; an Autobiography*, 673.

²⁸² Francis E. Clark, *The Christian Endeavor Manual : a Text-book on the History, Theory, Principles, and Practice of the Society, with Complete Bibliography and Several Appendixes* (Boston: United Society of Christian Endeavor, 1903); Francis E. Clark, *Young People's Prayer-Meetings in Theory and Practice: With Fifteen Hundred Topics* (New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1887); Harriet Elizabeth Abbott CLARK, *Junior Endeavor in Theory and Practice*. (Andrew Melrose: London, [1904., 1904).

²⁸³ Francis E. Clark, *Some Christian Endeavor Saints*. (Boston; Chicago: Congregational Sunday-school and Pub. soc., 1892).

²⁸⁴ John R Clements and Francis E Clark, *Francis E. Clark Year-book: a Collection of Living Paragraphs from Addresses, Books, and Magazine Articles by the Founder of the Young People's Society of Christian Endeavor* (Boston: United Society of Christian Endeavor, 1904).

²⁸⁵ Clark, *Memories of Many Men in Many Lands; an Autobiography*.

²⁸⁶ Francis E Clark, *The Kingdom Within; Selections From the Imitation of Christ* (Boston; Chicago: United Society of Christian Endeavor, 1898).

through five editions.²⁸⁷ He also used the insights gained from travelling to celebrate the culture of recent immigrants to America.²⁸⁸ In addition to these books, many of the themes and topics of chapters showed up as sermons, articles and pamphlets.

Clark, busy with the work of organizing, communicating and inspiring people for Christian Endeavor, wrote everywhere, including and especially during his travels. “I have been more favored than most busy men in having opportunities for such literary work, because much of it has been done in what would otherwise have been largely wasted time, on steamers or railway trains. The work has beguiled the tedium of many long journeys.”²⁸⁹ Clark wrote extensively himself, but had help in transcribing his many works.

Many of the articles have been toilsomely written with one of my many fountain pens that have been worn out in the service. Quite as many perhaps have been dictated to my secretary, or to my good wife, who on many journeys together has carried her useful little Blickensderfer, otherwise known as her “Kezia,” in her trunk. I have never learned to use a typewriter myself, but why should I when I have such efficient and willing helpers in my office and my home? Moral: Young man, marry your stenographer, or get her to learn the art of typewriting after you are married as I did.²⁹⁰

Clark tried to use all his down time to write. On his trip to South Africa from India, he wrote, “In fifteen minutes I am on deck again with some solid reading and my lap tablet, for the last four hours of the morning. I have already written one little devotional book on

²⁸⁷ Francis E. Clark and Harriet E. Clark, *Our Journey Around the World : an Illustrated Record of a Year's Travel : or Forty Thousand Miles through India, China, Japan, Australia, New Zealand, Egypt, Palestine, Greece, Turkey, Italy, France, Spain, Etc.* (Hartford, Conn.: A.D. Worthington & Co., 1895).

²⁸⁸ Francis E. Clark, *Old Homes of New Americans the Country and the People of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy and Their Contribution to the New World* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1913); Francis E. Clark, *Our Italian Fellow Citizens in Their Old Homes and Their New* (New York: Arno Press, 1919).

²⁸⁹ Clark, *Memories of Many Men in Many Lands; an Autobiography*, 673.

²⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 674.

Jeremiah, and am at work on another, called 'The Great Secret,' I hope they will do some good; at any rate they have done me good."²⁹¹

In addition to writing while traveling, Clark would set aside time away from his Boston office to write. "Although France, like most Catholic countries, has never been a field for extensive work in Christian Endeavor, Dr. Clark occasionally spent vacations from the busy periods of travel in the south of France and along the Riviera. Much of his voluminous writing was done here and on similar holidays snatched from travel."²⁹²

Clark continued to value and utilize writing throughout his life.

The success of the paper led to some profits that would benefit the society greatly. From the Treasurer's report from the ninth convention, "It is my pleasure to announce that we have every reason to expect that this year the profits from our printing and publishing will meet all the expenses of the United Society, and that therefore there will be no collection at this convention and no appeal made to the societies for contributions in any way."²⁹³

Once Clark accepted the Presidency of Christian Endeavor, writing would become his only source of income, acting as his "tent needle" to support his Endeavor work,

I have not taken myself as an author too seriously, and I do not claim any superior literary ability, but I am thankful to God that writing has been no ungrateful task. I think I can fairly say that though I may have written too much and too hastily, I have tried to express my views clearly and honestly, and have written little,

²⁹¹ Clark and Clark, *A Son's Portrait of Dr. Francis E. Clark.*, 135.

²⁹² Ibid., 119.

²⁹³ *Ninth Annual Conference of the Young People's Society of Christian Endeavor: Held in St. Louis Exposition and Music Hall, St. Louis, Missouri, Thursday, Friday, Saturday and Sunday, June 12, 13, 14, and 15, 1890, with Addresses and Papers Read at the Conference* (Boston, MA: United Society of Christian Endeavor, 1890), 24.

however poor its literary merits, that I would wish unwritten. Moreover, my pen has been to me what St. Paul's tent-needle was to him, and has largely paid my way in all my journeys, and has enabled me to give my life to the cause of Christian Endeavor, without salary or traveling expenses to foreign lands from the United Society or the World's Christian Endeavor Union. I would not say too much about this matter, but I am so often asked about it that a word of explanation is not out of place. My peculiar relation to the Christian Endeavor movement accounts for what may be considered an undue scrupulosity in this matter, as my friends have often called it.²⁹⁴

Not that this led to any great riches. "Including the salary that came to him for some time as Editor of *The Christian Endeavor World*, he averaged during nearly forty years, from this salary and other literary earnings, less remuneration than he formerly received as a pastor."²⁹⁵

The writings of Clark became his "silent missionaries" that he could send at a moment's notice all over the world. The paper was very successful and "It was the pioneer of a host of Christian Endeavor publications, in all corners of the world."²⁹⁶ Clark wrote many books as well including some about his travels, but mostly about Christian Endeavor. The writing did not stop for Clark.

Much of my time of late has been occupied with writing fortieth anniversary stories of Christian Endeavor, which *the Independent*, *the Continent*, *New Era*, *Christian Herald*, and the *Boston Transcript* have asked for. The latter, next Saturday, will give us a page, and when I had sent in one article, like *Oliver Twist*, asked for another. The story seems to be more in demand than ever before, and all the religious papers have carried it. Former Governor Glynn of New York, though a Roman Catholic, wrote for his Albany paper a very laudatory signed editorial.²⁹⁷

While Clark retired formally from the Presidency of Christian Endeavor in 1926, he continued to write for *The Christian Endeavor World* right up until his death in 1927.

²⁹⁴ Clark, *Memories of Many Men in Many Lands; an Autobiography*, 674–675.

²⁹⁵ Chaplin, *Francis E. Clark : Founder of the Y.P.S.C.E.*, 132.

²⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 126.

²⁹⁷ Clark and Clark, *A Son's Portrait of Dr. Francis E. Clark.*, 178–179.

While Clark realized the effectiveness of his writing in promoting Christian Endeavor around the world, he also realized that its effectiveness in reaching people was out of his own control. Clark reflects,

If there ever was a psychological moment for the cause I had at heart, it was the moment when these articles and this book appeared in print. Rather let me say, it was God's moment, for throughout my whole life I have been impressed a hundred times over with the Divine leading in these matters. The right time, the right occasion, the right man, without any knowledge or planning on my part, seem to have been found; - the time, the occasion, the man that of all others could promote this organized effort of Christian nurture.²⁹⁸

Clark seemed to realize that his unique set of skills in writing and networking were for such a time as this.

²⁹⁸ Clark, *Memories of Many Men in Many Lands; an Autobiography*, 671.

Chapter 7: Global Travel

While it can be said that few people wrote as much to as large an audience as Francis Clark, it can also be said that few people traveled as much or as broadly as Clark. Another significant factor that led to the growth of Christian Endeavor was Clark's willingness to go to where people were. He traveled extensively around the U.S. and the world with the message of Christian Endeavor. He traveled further than he could have ever imagined and he took Christian Endeavor with him.

Most of Clark's travels were centered around Christian Endeavor Conventions. Those will be discussed in some depth later, but it is important to note that Clark viewed his travels as following and supporting Christian Endeavor. Rarely did Clark consider himself to be a planter of Christian Endeavor. For Clark, his writings and other people did the planting, his visits were the fertilizer to help the new societies grow and to keep the established societies growing in the right direction.

In the United States travel was made significantly easier with the expansion of the railroads. In particular as they sought to connect growing urban centers and the commerce that came with those connections, they made travel around the entire United States easy and affordable.²⁹⁹ The first automobiles were made and utilized during this time, although Clark would never see their wide usage for long travel.

Global Travel

²⁹⁹ Klein, *The Flowering of the Third America : the Making of an Organizational Society, 1850-1920*, 47, 151.

For global travel Clark benefited from an expansion in steam liners and the competition for the travel market from the United States to England (New York to Liverpool and later Boston to Liverpool and New York to London). The 1870's and 1880's were a significant time of development in ocean going steam liners.³⁰⁰ The White Star Line developed the *Oceanic* line of ships which used a new compound engine greatly diminishing the expenditure of fuel, a new hull form, and improved passenger arrangements. This allowed people to travel faster, at less of a cost and in more comfort than ever before. The time aboard a ship traveling from New York or Boston to Liverpool or Southampton would be trimmed to less than 8 days.³⁰¹ It was easier with these significant and on-going improvements to travel to other parts of the world.

Of particular interest in the growth of Christian Endeavor is that while it did spread rapidly in the United States, its global growth spread eastward much more quickly than westward. The other "Industrialized" countries of the West were not the early adopters, but their growth did unlock a successful pattern for the continuation of growth in Christian Endeavor. Clark did not go to Great Britain until 1888. His trip started poorly when his trunk was left on the wharf.³⁰² This was perhaps a metaphor for the slow start that Christian Endeavor would have in Great Britain. "He came at the invitation of the Sunday School Union, which by its fostering care during the early years did so much to strengthen and multiply the Societies of Christian Endeavor in the United Kingdom. At first the growth was slow. It was freely said that Christian Endeavor was not in harmony

³⁰⁰ Charles Robert Vernon Gibbs, *Passenger Liners of the Western Ocean; a Record of the North Atlantic Steam and Motor Passenger Vessels from 1838 to the Present Day*. (London; New York: Staples Press, 1952), 225.

³⁰¹ Ibid., 229–230.

with the genius of English institutions, and that no great progress need be looked for in this country.”³⁰³ Eventually, Christian Endeavor would take root there, but perhaps more importantly, Clark would learn from this trip the connection of relationships to growth. Travel became a key to unlocking both.

That was the beginning of a long series of Christian Endeavor journeys which took Dr. Clark four times around the world in the interests of the Movement - in 1893, in 1900, in 1904, and in 1909. Besides these journeys, in 1896 he made a trip half-way round the world, visiting Europe, India and Africa, returning by practically the same route. All these journeys were made at Dr. Clark’s own expense. They cost the organization nothing, but enriched it in many ways. In addition to these long journeys Dr. Clark visited both Europe and Asia many times, and his countless journeys in America make a travel mileage which probably would entitle him to be known as one of the most traveled men in the world.³⁰⁴

Clark’s travels would follow the growth of the movement and often that led him East.

While Christian Endeavor was spreading in the European countries, it was making even more rapid progress in some of the eastern lands where American missionaries had been working for generations. India was an especially fruitful field and both American and English missionaries wrote, urgently asking for a visit from Dr. Clark. He had spent some weeks in country in 1893, but he responded to the appeals for a second visit, and in 1896 set out alone from Germany, leaving his family in Berlin for the winter. This journey was also to include South Africa which had not been visited before.³⁰⁵

Of particular note here is that the planting of Christian Endeavor had been done by American missionaries who had been exposed to Christian Endeavor there and believed in its principles enough to take it with them. Clark always realized the value of those people on the ground who were implementing Christian Endeavor in new lands.

Clark viewed all the people he met as friends. For him the joining of Christian

³⁰² Chaplin, *Francis E. Clark : Founder of the Y.P.S.C.E.*, 59.

³⁰³ Ibid.

³⁰⁴ Ibid., 61.

³⁰⁵ Clark and Clark, *A Son’s Portrait of Dr. Francis E. Clark.*, 124.

Endeavorers around the world amounted to uniting friends. From his speech at the 12th convention, “I bring you, my friends, the greetings from your fellow-Endeavorers in all lands. I rejoice to be the personal bearer of personal greetings from personal friends to personal friends.”³⁰⁶ Clark enjoyed making new friendships and did his best to respond to their requests for visits.

The extent of these invitations and their reach demonstrated the global penetration of Christian Endeavor. At the 16th convention Clark reported of his travels: “By Methodists and Baptists, by Presbyterians and Congregationalists, by Friends and Disciples of Christ, by Episcopalians and Lutherans, by adherents of the state churches of Germany and Sweden and Holland and Scotland and England, as well as by representatives of every free church have I been kindly received in the name of Christian Endeavor, and by every missionary society at work in India or Africa.”³⁰⁷

Also remarkable was the unity Clark found in the core Christian Endeavor principles in those diverse settings.

At the invitation of friends, and in obedience to the call of God, as I believe I have, during the past year, been journeying in many lands, among people who speak many tongues. These journeys in behalf of Christian Endeavor have carried me more than 40,000 miles, to more than a score of peoples, who speak nearly as many languages. One factor I have found constant in all these lands: I have found Christian Endeavor principles everywhere the same. The same pledge, the same consecration meeting, the same general lines of effort for the Master, called Committee Work; the utmost diversity in unessential details; the utmost similarity of purpose in essential principles.³⁰⁸

³⁰⁶ *Twelfth International Conference of the Young People's Society of Christian Endeavor: Held in Montreal, P.Q., July 5-9, 1893* (Boston: United Society of Christian Endeavor, 1893), 76.

³⁰⁷ *Sixteenth International Conference of the Young People's Society of Christian Endeavor: Held in the Mechanics', Woodward's Pavilions, and in Many Churches, San Francisco, Cal., July 7-12, 1897* (Boston: United Society of Christian Endeavor, 1897), 50.

³⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 41.

Christian Endeavor was being adapted and adopted in different cultures and contexts both in the United States and around the world. Because the society seemed to flourish so well in so many different places,

This situation led to innumerable invitations to attend the conventions of the society in all parts of the world, and resulted in nineteen journeys to foreign lands, five of which circled the globe. That was in addition to hundreds of shorter journeys in the United States which filled in the intervals between the ocean voyages. It would probably be an understatement to say that Dr. Clark travelled at least one million miles in the interests of Christian Endeavor, and addressed millions of people on his journeys.³⁰⁹

Clark valued his worldwide friendships and they guided many of his decisions in leading Christian Endeavor. It is not surprising that he titled his autobiography, *Memories of Many Men in Many Lands*.

A journal entry from his 1897 trip to India illustrates the acceptance and integration of Christian Endeavor:

We reached Chabbakharbar at two A.M. and the convention began at seven and lasted for twelve hours almost without recess, except one or two brief spells for eating. You ought to have seen the Endeavorers dance a holy polka to the Lord. A celebrated dancer and singer would go out and waltz a society into the chapel to the beating of drums and clashing of cymbals. When they got in they would dance a wild fling and then squat down on the floor. Then the leader would go out into the coconut jungle and dance in another squad of societies. Fifty-five societies were represented and it was really a very good convention and had the true Endeavor spirit.

At last the crowd became so great that they had to leave the little chapel and go out into the open, where we held consecration meeting.³¹⁰

There are few places Clark's travels did not take him. "These travels extended from England to Australia, from Japan to Russia and Germany by way of the Siberian Railway,

³⁰⁹ Clark and Clark, *A Son's Portrait of Dr. Francis E. Clark*, 105.

³¹⁰ Ibid., 176.

from Egypt to Scandinavia and Iceland, from Canada to Argentine, and through the islands of the sea.”³¹¹ According to his son, Clark’s travels earned him the nickname, “the most traveled man in the world”.³¹²

Table 2: Francis E. Clark’s Travels as President of Christian Endeavor Society³¹³

1888 - England

1892-1893 - Hawaii, New Zealand, Australia, China, Japan, India, Egypt, Syria, Turkey, Spain, and Great Britain

1894-5 - Great Britain

1896 -1898 - Mexico, Jamaica and Cuba

1896-7 - India

1897 - South Africa

1900 - China, Siberia, Great Britain

1901-1902 - Denmark, Norway, Sweden and Finland

1902 - Italy, Bohemia, Bulgaria, Macedonia, Greece, Iceland

1903-1904 - New Zealand

1904 - Australia and South Africa

1904-1905 -France, England, Scotland, Germany, Norway

1905-1906 - Dalmatia, Montenegro, Corfu, Balkan States, Hungary, Great Britain,

Switzerland

1906-1907 - Jamaica and Panama

³¹¹ Ibid., 140.

³¹² Ibid.; Chaplin, *Francis E. Clark : Founder of the Y.P.S.C.E.*, 61.

³¹³ Clark, *Memories of Many Men in Many Lands; an Autobiography*.

1907 - Peru, Chile, Argentina, Uruguay, Brazil, England

1908 - England, Spain, France, Holland, Scandinavia

1909-1910 - Portugal, Spain, Italy, Egypt, India, Burma, Java, British North
Borneo, China, Japan, Hawaii

1911 - Holland, Germany, Poland, Russia, Hungary, Croatia

1911-12 - Turkey, Greece

1912 - Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Italy Switzerland

1913 - Sweden, Norway, Finland, Germany, France, Italy

1914 - Italy, Spain

1915 - Hawaii

1916 - Japan, Korea, China

1920 - Yugoslavia

1921 - Mexico

1921-22 - Germany, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Poland, Denmark, Holland,
England

Travel in the United States

This extensive travel would have been more than a full-time enterprise for many leaders, however Clark did not stop traveling when he returned to the United States.

“Glimpses of journeys taken by Dr. Clark in other lands have been given, but it is probably that these did not compromise in their total amount one half of the distance covered in the United States and Canada. There was a constant demand for his presence at conventions and conferences of Christian Endeavor, as preachers at regular Sunday

services, as a college preacher and adviser, or as a speaker on missionary and denominational occasions.”³¹⁴

Clark was a busy worker on these trips, however, he also learned to appreciate the character of local places. “One of the characteristics of Dr. Clark in his journeyings was his delight in the unusual and his interest in any diversion from the beaten paths. Many of these visits to the little-known regions were necessitated by his work for Christian Endeavor. Others were entered upon voluntarily or chosen as an alternate route.”³¹⁵ He was not afraid to try new things or go to new places.

The most noteworthy journey of this kind, and one which aroused wide interest, was the crossing of Siberia when the all-steam route was first opened in 1900. At that time Dr. Clark was on one of his journeys around the world with his wife and son Harold, and was due at the World’s Christian Endeavor Convention in London in July. Rather than follow the stereotyped sea-route from Hong-Kong along the coast of Cochin-China to India and through the Suez Canal, he elected to take the overland journey by way of Siberia. His party was among the first twenty passengers to make the crossing from its eastern terminus of Vladivostock.³¹⁶

Clark made it to London in time for the convention.

Travel Conditions

Clark’s travels were far from experiments in leisure. While traveling Clark spent his time writing. When he arrived at his destination, he spent his time speaking to as many as he could about Christian Endeavor and encouraging the work. The schedule would often contain meetings with Christian Endeavor leaders and area church leaders, a training session or two with those leaders, a local or an area Christian Endeavor

³¹⁴ Clark and Clark, *A Son’s Portrait of Dr. Francis E. Clark.*, 150.

³¹⁵ Ibid., 140.

³¹⁶ Ibid., 141.

convention, and preaching. To illustrate the intensity of most of his travels a few accounts from his journals are helpful. In relating the busy schedule he kept while travelling, he records: "I am obliged to speak twice every day except when I speak three or four times, and never am allowed to go to bed until 12 o'clock and after. But then I have four meals a day to make up for lack of sleep, and all the tea I want to drink."³¹⁷ Clark's busyness in travel was true both at home and abroad.

Here is an entry from 1895:

This is Sunday night, and I have finished my fifth service. They did not know I was coming there until a few days ago, so did not give me much to do, you see.

This morning I spoke at the Kountz Memorial Lutheran Church, addressed a big mass meeting there this afternoon, addressed two Christian Endeavor Societies and another mass meeting this evening in a Christian Church.³¹⁸

From Nashville he writes: "All over town my picture is staring out at me as big as life, from a thousand shop windows until I hate the sight of myself, and the street cars are labeled, "Dr. Clark at the Auditorium."³¹⁹

In a letter from Cleveland in 1908: "Yesterday they treated me cruel hard, making me preach at 3.30, speak and conduct a preachers' meeting at 4.45, drink tea at 5.45, speak and conduct a workers' conference at 6.15, speak at a big public meeting at 7.00, conduct a consecration meeting at 8.30, and then meet the minister and others at supper until 11.00."³²⁰

While Clark was traveling far and wide, his trips were always full of Christian

³¹⁷ Ibid., 108.

³¹⁸ Ibid., 150.

³¹⁹ Ibid., 151.

³²⁰ Ibid., 108.

Endeavor activity. Clark stayed busy traveling with his writing. When he arrived at a destination he was always greeted with strong hospitality and a full schedule. His pattern would often involve meeting Christian Endeavor and church leaders, a local or area convention, a training session or two with area leaders, and preaching.

On his arrival in Finland: “We have had a great time in Abo and as strenuous as strenuous. From 11.00 yesterday morning to 11.00 in the evening there was no let-up of meetings, conferences, dinners, coffees, etc., ending with a grand wind-up in the cathedral, which was crowded and many standing... Christian Endeavor is making rapid headway in Finland both in the free churches and in the state church and there are now about 700 societies.”³²¹

These snapshots show not only the busyness of Clark in his travels, but also of the growth of Christian Endeavor.

Clark was always greeted warmly and his love for people, for the church and for Christ connected. He found himself a constant encouragement to both new Christian Endeavor societies and old, small and large, domestic and foreign. Clark’s travel became a significant influence in the growth of the movement.

Clark would also use his travels as more material for his writing. He tapped into the growing genre of travel writing to do so. He was successful enough in writing to not have to find any other means of funding until 1920. It was then that Clark made an arrangement with the Church Peace Union to help fund part of his travels and where he had to split his traveling duties.

Clark’s son reports: “In 1920 Dr. Clark went to France and other countries of

³²¹ Ibid., 113.

Europe as an emissary of the Church Peace Union, as well as for Christian Endeavor.”³²²

Francis Clark recorded in his journal,

I have been busy all day getting my passport visaed by the French counsul, for whom I had to wait an hour, getting a permit to sail at the custom house, after showing that I had paid my income tax for 1919, and had several other pieces of war-time tape to untie.

Then I had to visit the offices of the Church Peace Union, of the World Alliance of the Churches, of the League to Enforce Peace, and of the Federal Council of Churches, from all of which I am sort of special commissioner or representative on this journey with credentials. The Church Peace Union has contributed \$500 toward my travelling expenses, the first time I have had any help from anyone.³²³

This commitment to supporting Christian Endeavor all over the world at his own expense reveals Clark’s heart. He recognized the value of his presence and was willing to support the church all over the world in its efforts to reach and train young people.

Travel was not always glamorous. Clark realized its importance and found joy where he could, but there were many things that made travel challenging. Illness, danger, and a very busy schedule oftentimes made travel a struggle. In international travel a variety of modes of transportation were needed. Clark would also often take the train, “Much of the time during his European visits Dr. Clark spent on railway trains and these journeys frequently had to be taken without consideration for his personal comfort.”³²⁴ International travel was always full of unknowns. Traveling by boat, Clark recalls his trip, “It (the starboard) is the hot side of the ship and gets intolerably hot with the afternoon sun, especially on such a day as this when we have to keep the port shut on account of the waves which drenched my chum’s berth this morning. I cannot bear my hand on the iron

³²² Ibid., 120.

³²³ Ibid., 120–121.

³²⁴ Ibid., 115.

side of the ship just outside of my port.”³²⁵ Clark had a number of interesting activities in India.

Like many of Dr. Clark’s letters to his family, the one from which the following quotation is taken was written on the train, this time on the way from Ajmere to Agra:

You ought to have seen the style in which I left Rutlam. The Rajah had left two to go to school, but the Regent, an old and fine-looking Parsee, called on me just before my train left, and took me to the station in the royal carriage with two prancing white horses, two footmen in gorgeous red liveries, and a guard of honor prancing behind on white horses and armed with swords and spears. All the natives prostrated themselves with salaams, and evidently thought I was some great dignitary of state... He was full of authority in the state of Rutlam until the Rajah comes of age - three years more...

I heard the afore-mentioned old Hindu confide to one of the Parsees that he had a “skin disease,” the Lord only knows what. I hope it isn’t small-pox or itch. The plague grows worse and worse in Bombay. The city is half depopulated and four or five dead Hindus are taken out of the cars every day, whom the plague has overtaken as they were fleeing from it.

By the way, I found out afterwards that there was nothing the matters with the old Hindu party on the seat with me, except that he was a leper. His “skin disease” was a gentle euphemism. His fingers were all eaten off, but he considerably kept them covered with woolen gloves mostly. Travelling in India, like politics in America, makes queer bedfellows.³²⁶

As different as the experiences Clark had in India may have been, he loved the country and the people. Christian Endeavor was very active and growing there.

This is a great Christian Endeavor country, and William Carey, a great-grandson of the great William Carey, has established sixty C.E. societies. We are going to a convention at a village with an unpronounceable and unwritable name, 24 hours beyond Barisal. I think likely some of our fellow passengers are Christian Endeavorers going to the convention, but I am not proficient in Bengali, and besides they cannot pin a C.E. badge to themselves without hurting, so I cannot tell.”³²⁷ (The former comment has to do with the lack of clothing worn by those on the train, therefore there would be no place to attach a pin.)

³²⁵ Ibid., 125–126.

³²⁶ Ibid., 127–129.

³²⁷ Ibid., 130.

Christian Endeavor was taking root seemingly anywhere it was planted. Clark wanted to be a continuous source of encouraging water, especially in those faraway places without much support.

The adventures occasionally turned dangerous as well. “He was in dangers oft. He and Mrs. Clark were the last foreigners to leave Peking, before the Boxer rebellion broke in fury in China. He was once caught in a typhoon, and barely escaped with his life. He was sick almost unto death several times in foreign lands, being nursed back to health by Mrs. Clark. Once he was the main object of a plot by a band of assassins.”³²⁸ Clark continued on, driven by his desire to help the church.

Clark was well traveled, but those travels were not without adventure and struggle. “He climbed the Alps of Japan as well as of Europe; tasted the joys of Indian ‘tamathas’; wandered through plague stricken Bombay; held Christian Endeavor meetings in inns, idol temples, and even in the Taj Mahal; and sailed for twenty-three tedious days as the only white passenger on a crowded coolie-ship which was suspected of plague and was rich in indescribable smells.”³²⁹ The threat and reality of illness was ever present.

This tension between travel and the need to rest is exemplified in Clark’s trips from 1914-1916. The story picks up in Hawaii. “The winter of 1915-1916 Dr. And Mrs. Clark spent in Hawaii. Dr. Clark had not fully recovered from a serious attack of typhoid fever the previous summer, and here he succeeded in obtaining as nearly complete a rest as in any of his journeys to foreign lands.”³³⁰ Though illness and busyness may have

³²⁸ Chaplin, *Francis E. Clark : Founder of the Y.P.S.C.E.*, 62.

³²⁹ *Ibid.*, 59.

³³⁰ Clark and Clark, *A Son’s Portrait of Dr. Francis E. Clark.*, 146.

occupied Clark's attention for a while, it would always return to Christian Endeavor.

Christian Endeavor it would seem, would also always return to him.

As he wrapped up his time of healing in Hawaii he found himself busy again:

On Friday next we sail on the Shinyo Maru if nothing happens, and by the time you get this we will be nearing Japan. Engagements are multiplying here, and one of us has to speak almost every day somewhere. This morning I preach at the Methodist Church, and last Sunday at the Central Union, and Friday last at a big Christian Endeavor rally in honor of Christian Endeavor Day at the Kawaiahao church, the old native royal church, and to-morrow at Schofield Barracks to 2,000 colored troops. It doesn't seem to hurt me any, and I am testing myself a little for the work in the Orient.³³¹

Dr. And Mrs. Clark made their way to Japan as the guests of an old college classmate, the distinguished American missionary, Dr. James H. Pettie. In a letter home to his children he writes, "We have been as busy as two little bees since coming here, - welcome meetings and Christian Endeavor meetings, and preaching and peace meetings and junior meetings, and addresses at schools, etc."³³²

Clark busily and dutifully advanced the cause of Christian Endeavor in Japan. His busy schedule seemed to assist in the work of Endeavor there, but it was not without a price. "The journey was continued to China where Dr. Clark found that his convalescence was not as complete as he had imagined, and where he was confined to his bed for weeks, awaiting the strength to return home. It was not until June that he was able to continue the journey."³³³ It is easy to see how the travel both invigorated and wore down Clark.

Towards the end of his life the travel seemed to grow much more difficult and

³³¹ Ibid., 147.

³³² Ibid., 148.

³³³ Ibid.

taxing. “In 1921 Dr. Clark undertook a long Christian Endeavor trip through Canada and the United States. He found travelling harder than in earlier years, but his courage had not deserted him.”³³⁴ Clark had mentioned to others that the travel was becoming more difficult and that he was desiring to retire from the presidency of Christian Endeavor in part because of his limitations in visiting his friends. Because they so valued his leadership and the breadth of his relationships the organization was willing to accept his limitations in order to keep him as president.

Because of this, Clark decreased the amount of travel and limited the places he was willing to visit. “Among the last of the travel experiences that Dr. Clark has recorded many are in the south, and they indicate increasing infirmity though no diminution in his interest in life and people.”³³⁵

Even after Clark was able to retire from Christian Endeavor, he still traveled to conventions and encouraged the faithful. “The last letter Dr. Clark wrote was from the South, from Florida, in March 1927. Although already weakened, and feeble from the illness that was so soon to take him, there is no hint of this in his correspondence.”³³⁶ In fact, Clark was very sick. Mrs. Clark was quite worried that he might not make the return trip home. “This winter visit to Florida was Dr. Clark’s last journey, and it was only with extreme care and difficulty that it was made possible for him to return North for the few weeks left him.”³³⁷ Clark’s passion for connecting young people to Christ and the church led him to pursue relationships even to the end.

³³⁴ Ibid., 155.

³³⁵ Ibid., 159.

³³⁶ Ibid., 160.

³³⁷ Ibid., 161.

Public Speaking

Almost everywhere he went, Clark was required to speak a number of times. He enjoyed preaching and speaking publicly and his personality and energy seemed to attract people. “Dr. Clark embodied the trend of the times, and his winsome, energetic personality gave to the church of the eighties exactly the society it was looking for. He was the prophet of that day.”³³⁸ He was naturally gifted this way as his experiences when he was younger bear out. He had success in college in public speaking, enjoyed favor at Andover and when he started preaching in Portland he was well received.

After his few sermons in the pulpit at New Boston while still attending seminary, he appears aware that his writing flair affects his speaking as well:

It is a wonder to see how the people seem to like me here, for I don’t think it’s egotism to say that they do. I begin to be afraid that it’s because they find something ‘almost sensational’ in my sermons as Professor Thayer’s criticism runs, and as the boys at Andover tell me. They always punch me (my particular friends do) when anything occurs in Professor Phelps’ lectures about sensationalism, clap-trap, etc. However, when I write carefully I can’t seem to write differently, for when a dull sentence and comparatively bright one come into one’s mind at the same time it’s ‘ag’in’ natur’ to choose the dull one.³³⁹

His sermon preparation was very interesting to him as he writes to his father from his early days in Portland: “At 8.30, I begin to work on my sermon, and have some solid hours until one o’clock. I have given notice from the pulpit to that effect so that no one dares intrude on those morning hours. This part of the day I enjoy very much. In fact there is no part of the work I enjoy so much as writing sermons, except perhaps preaching them. Subjects crowd in far faster than I can write upon them.”³⁴⁰

³³⁸ Erb, *The Development of the Young People’s Movement.*, 58.

³³⁹ Clark and Clark, *A Son’s Portrait of Dr. Francis E. Clark.*, 66–67.

³⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 74.

Indeed speaking became one of the primary ways that Clark was able to spread the news of Christian Endeavor in his many travels. He would take every opportunity given. Chaplin reports,

Few men had wider experience of public speaking than the Apostle of Christian Endeavor. He often had to give several addresses in a day, and for many days successively; he delivered impromptu addresses on trains and boats; he preached in cathedrals, and addressed open-air meetings; he gave his best to tiny gatherings in out-of-the-way places; and he spoke to vast audiences of five, six, and even ten thousand.³⁴¹

His speaking became another of the ways he helped support the church.

This proved very interesting in international locations in particular. “Dr. Clark claimed no skill as a linguist, and had to make thousands of addresses through interpreters.”³⁴² The relationship Clark had with interpreters might best be described as a “love/hate” relationship. Clark often utilized indigenous pastors as his interpreters, or “interrupters” as he sometimes called them.³⁴³ He recognized that not all interpreters were equal to the task and sometimes found himself frustrated with the lack of quality and the difficulty in conveying his message. Nonetheless, Christian Endeavor’s message seems to have gotten through because the movement continued to grow.

Clark was never one to speak well of himself. But others saw his speaking as a real strength. “He had a good voice, which he used in a natural and unaffected manner; his enunciation was cultured and distinct, without any marked accent, except when he assumed it for the better rendering of humorous quotation or pointed story, and then he

³⁴¹ Chaplin, *Francis E. Clark : Founder of the Y.P.S.C.E.*, 107.

³⁴² Clark and Clark, *A Son’s Portrait of Dr. Francis E. Clark.*, 114.

³⁴³ *Ibid.*, 115.

could be most amusingly ‘Yankee.’”³⁴⁴ It becomes evident in reading his speeches and in hearing others talk about Clark that his heart for the young people, for the church and for Christ always came through. “His power was in his winning personality, the transparent sincerity which touches and holds even prejudiced hearers, and the intense earnestness which is always more effective than any oratorical art. One secret of his success on the platform was that he was simply himself.”³⁴⁵ This ability to be himself on the stage (and in his writing) undoubtedly allowed Clark to speak so well in so many different locations.

Clark’s Role

Clark’s mission was always clear to him and he always embraced it fully. He understood the value of his message not as coming from himself, but as connecting to something much bigger. “Dr. Clark was always lost in his work; his message was infinitely more than his own fame or success. As some wise observer once said of him, he would rather be the piston than the fly-wheel of the great organization he founded. And those who knew him well will not need to be told that when he addressed a gathering of Endeavorers, it was as a messenger whose supreme care was to speak his Master’s message.”³⁴⁶ Clark’s focused message helped him to be so effective in communicating so clearly to so many.

Clark also would encounter people in his travels who did not know of Christian Endeavor, but this did not last long. He would recruit them to become messengers of

³⁴⁴ Chaplin, *Francis E. Clark : Founder of the Y.P.S.C.E.*, 108.

³⁴⁵ Ibid.

³⁴⁶ Ibid., 108–109.

Christian Endeavor as they went.

The first society in France was started in the McAll Mission.

... I was invited by the venerable Dr. McAll to visit him in his home in Paris to explain the working of the society. It was toward the end of his life. He was old and feeble, and seemed harassed with a multitude of the details of his mission, but his first assistant and successor, Mr. Greig, warmly welcomed the society and declared that it was the exact thing that he had been especially longing and praying for on the very day of my visit, of which he had not been previously informed.”³⁴⁷

Spain’s work was advanced by Mrs. Gulick, an American educator working on the Iberian Peninsula.³⁴⁸ She was another person that Clark recruited to the work. Sometimes these recruitments would come out of intentional visits and other times accidental encounters led to more. Clark was very sick with “the Grippe” (the flu) in 1894 and was unable to attend the convention in Cleveland. His illness drove him to Switzerland searching for a better climate to facilitate his healing. “While gaining health and strength in the delicious bracing climate of Switzerland, a letter came to me from a young German pastor, Herr Blecher by name, who desired to know more of the Society, something about it having already appeared in the German papers.”³⁴⁹ Clark met with Blecher and recruited him to Christian Endeavor work. Clark comments on Blecher, “With flaming enthusiasm and apostolic zeal, and a face shining with the joy of his message, he went everywhere and enlisted everybody who would listen, as he told of this method of Christian nurture.”³⁵⁰ Thus Christian Endeavor would spread through Clark’s encounters with those unaware.

³⁴⁷ Clark, *Memories of Many Men in Many Lands; an Autobiography*, 156.

³⁴⁸ Ibid.

³⁴⁹ Ibid., 155; Pagel, Arno, *Worldwide Christian Endeavor*, 18–23.

³⁵⁰ Clark, *Memories of Many Men in Many Lands; an Autobiography*, 156.

But Christian Endeavor would spread often without Clark's help or knowledge. The growth would come from people experiencing Christian Endeavor and then taking it with them as they were sent to various parts of the world. Fourteen years after the first prayer meeting, Clark was at the American Church in Berlin where he ran into George F. Libby, who had been a twelve year old attendee at that first meeting.³⁵¹ Christian Endeavor had taken root there and Libby had been a part of its growth. "From Germany the news of the work spread to the Scandinavian countries, to Russian Poland and Russia proper, to Austria and Hungary, to German Switzerland, and to some of the Balkan states, though the American missionaries in Bohemia, Bulgaria, and Macedonia were most efficient in establishing the societies in those countries."³⁵²

As Clark traveled he would often visit missionaries who had taken Christian Endeavor from the United States and began to implement it wherever they were sent. Clark was aware that American missionaries and other churchmen were incredibly helpful in spreading Christian Endeavor globally. Christian Endeavor was always a supporter of missions so this led to a natural sending of many Christian Endeavorers into the field.

A missionary took Christian Endeavor to China. The Rev. George H. Hubbard, of Foochow, could not see why the Movement should not be just as good for China as he had found it in America, so he organized a society in a Church at Foochow. The first Chinese Endeavorer was Mr. Ling, who said in an address at a Convention in Shanghai that the object of their Christian Endeavor Society was 'to drive the devil out of China.' They have not wholly succeeded in doing that yet, but all over China over 2,500 societies are doing something towards it. There is now a United Society for all China. The first society in Foochow was called by a Chinese word which means "The Drum and Rouse-up Society" - not a bad

³⁵¹ Clark, *World Wide Endeavor : the Story of the Young People's Society of Christian Endeavor, from the Beginning and in All Lands*, 72.

³⁵² Clark, *Memories of Many Men in Many Lands; an Autobiography*, 156.

translation of Christian Endeavor.”³⁵³

Christian Endeavor traveled East far before Clark could. “A young man who was a member of the second society at Newburyport sailed on his father’s ship to Brisbane, Australia, and told one of the pastors of that city the story of Christian Endeavor, and a society was forthwith organized.”³⁵⁴ The influence of Christian Endeavor on young people in America caused many missionary families to value it so much that they would take it with them. “The ‘Kyorelkwai’ is the Japanese name for Christian Endeavor. The first society in Japan was formed by the missionary children of the different stations. Once a year, at the annual meeting of the mission, they held their meeting all together as a society, and during the rest of the year they met as branch societies in their separate homes. This again meant seeding and extension.”³⁵⁵

Christian Endeavor took root in Europe in a similar manner. “In 1889 a society was formed in a mission station not far from Caesarea by an Armenian who had studied in America. He began with his Sunday-school. The next year he spoke of it at a conference, and the missionaries requested him to prepare a Christian Endeavor manual in the Turkish language. Despite many difficulties, the work has grown and spread, till there are now quite a large number of societies in Turkey.”³⁵⁶ Christian Endeavorers around the world wanted Clark to visit; not to start the movement there, but to encourage it.

While Christian Endeavor was spreading in the European countries, it was making

³⁵³ Chaplin, *Francis E. Clark : Founder of the Y.P.S.C.E.*, 50.

³⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 50–51.

³⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 51.

³⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

even more rapid progress in some of the eastern lands where American missionaries had been working for generations. India was an especially fruitful field and both American and English missionaries wrote, urgently asking for a visit from Dr. Clark. He had spent some weeks in country in 1893, but he responded to the appeals for a second visit, and in 1896 set out alone from Germany, leaving his family in Berlin for the winter. This journey was also to include South Africa which had not been visited before.³⁵⁷

Clark realized that Christian Endeavor was growing around the world. Oftentimes this growth came as a result of Christian Endeavorers own initiative. This delighted him and he sought to support this growth and those groups as much as he could. “We have become in the broadest sense, more than ever during these two years past, an *international* organization. In every land beneath the sun the name ‘Christian Endeavor’ is known, and its principles are acknowledged. Almost without knowing it, certainly without much human guidance, we have become a world-wide brotherhood that embraces every race and region.”³⁵⁸ (25th 18-19). Clark saw his role to support this growth.

With this purpose in mind I have, since last we met in an International Convention, visited Germany, Holland, Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Finland, Russia, Austria, Hungary, France, Switzerland, Italy, Greece, Macedonia, Turkey, Syria, and Egypt; and in almost all these countries I have found at least the beginnings of a vigorous Christian Endeavor movement, and in many of them an aggressive and well-developed national organization.³⁵⁹

Christian Endeavor acted as a catalyst for young people to join in mission work around the world. It also became a primary method for reaching young people in those places. This missionary impulse of Christian Endeavor is exemplified by this story from

³⁵⁷ Clark and Clark, *A Son's Portrait of Dr. Francis E. Clark.*, 124.

³⁵⁸ *Twenty-Fifth International Christian Endeavor Convention: Held on The Million-Dollar Pier and in Many Churches, Atlantic City, N.J., July 6-12, 1911* (Boston: United Society of Christian Endeavor, 1911), 18-19.

³⁵⁹ *Twenty-Sixth International Christian Endeavor Convention: Held in Fiesta Park, The Temple Beautiful, and in Many Churches, Los Angeles, California, July 9-14, 1913* (Boston: United Society of Christian Endeavor, 1913), 39.

Africa.

Two African missionaries, hitherto strangers to each other, met recently at a conference. One of them remarked on the familiar Christian Endeavor badge hanging on the other's watch fob. "So you, too, are a Christian Endeavorer," he said. "What that badge stands for sent me to Africa." "It sent me here, too," said the badge wearer. Just then a new recruit joined the party. "I too," remarked the third, 'am here because of my Christian Endeavor pledge. I concluded that to go to Africa was what Jesus would have me do."³⁶⁰

Christian Endeavor benefited from missionaries and mission work benefited from Christian Endeavor. "It is no exaggeration to say that at least five hundred missionaries and ministers and eminent religious leaders have given me this same whole-hearted testimony of the influence on their lives of the Christian Endeavor pledge."³⁶¹

It is also important to note that later, as the organization grew, Christian Endeavor would help facilitate sending missionaries to certain regions to assist in Christian Endeavor's growth. A letter from Ralph Robertson General Secretary of India Christian Endeavor illustrates the value of this, "We do not forget the enthusiastic work of Rev. F.S. Hatch, so generously lent to us by American Endeavorers, the results of whose work abide with us still, and will abide..."³⁶²

Conventions

Clark's son, Eugene, who had a front row seat to much of his father's travel and absences due to travel, notes in his biography about his father:

It will of course be realized that the many journeys which have been chronicled

³⁶⁰ Chaplin, *Francis E. Clark : Founder of the Y.P.S.C.E.*, 118–119.

³⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 119.

³⁶² *Thirtieth International Christian Endeavor Convention: Held in Portland, Oregon, July 4 to 10, 1925* (Boston: United Society of Christian Endeavor, 1925), 106.

were undertaken primarily, and almost exclusively, in the interests of Christian Endeavor. There were compensations in the new contacts, sights and experiences that were always eagerly sought, but the labor of the meetings and conventions, absorbing as it was to Dr. Clark, was intense. The story of the conventions belongs properly to a history of Christian Endeavor, but they were so vital a part of Dr. Clark's activity that they must receive consideration in any story of his life.³⁶³

The influence of the Christian Endeavor conventions on the growth and public face of the organization cannot be overestimated. From humble beginnings with a few hundred attendees to large gatherings with tens of thousands, the gathering of Endeavorers marked the growth of the movement in numbers, reach and impact. In this age of organization, the Christian Endeavor conventions were exercises in organizing people and a movement.

Clark did not have any idea when he organized the first convention what would become of these gatherings. He did later understand the power of that first gathering in spreading Christian Endeavor. In his account of Christian Endeavor's growth and history, *Christian Endeavor in All Lands*, he notes:

One event which hastened the exodus of the Christian Endeavor Society was doubtless a little convention or "conference," as it was then modestly called, which was held in Williston Church on the second day of June, 1882. This conference was certainly "the day of small things" from the modern convention standpoint. But it is significant that before the first society was eighteen months old it should call together its few friends and neighbors, saying, "Rejoice with me." This gathering was a forecast, small and insignificant as it was, of one of the great means which have been used of God in promoting the exodus of the Christian Endeavor idea.³⁶⁴

Through the limited accounts of the first convention it seems that Clark gathered people to share best practices as much as anything else. At the time of the first conference six societies, with less than five hundred members, were represented. The only delegates

³⁶³ Clark and Clark, *A Son's Portrait of Dr. Francis E. Clark.*, 162.

³⁶⁴ Clark, *Christian Endeavor in All Lands*, 59.

from outside the city of Portland were from Bath, Maine, thirty-five miles north.³⁶⁵ This first gathering was a huge success. Those present became even more energized for the cause of Christian Endeavor and became great promoters. “After all, the same spirit prevailed in that modest little convention of 1882, the same themes were discussed, the same fellowship enjoyed, which have made memorable these later gatherings.”³⁶⁶ The energy of the gathering left the attendees wanting more; more connections, more information and more people engaged in the principles of Christian Endeavor.

From that first small convention, Christian Endeavor and its conventions grew. The growth was slower at first, but it definitely picked up momentum. Many of the obstacles of gathering people together from around the nation and eventually the world would be removed. Availability and cost of transportation came down significantly. Options for traveling went up. Momentum for these gatherings increased as well.

The conventions over the next five years remained fairly small in size and scope. The impact of these however continued to be felt. Clark and the other leaders were continuing to be overwhelmed with correspondence from around the country asking for more information and copies of the constitution. At the fourth convention in Ocean Park, Maine, 1885:

At this meeting all the early leaders of Christian Endeavor were present, besides Dr. Clark, the Rev. Messrs. C.A. Dickinson, J.L. Hill, S.W. Adriance, H.B. Grose, N. Boynton, and active lay workers, including Messrs. Pennell, Van Patten, and Shaw. It is significant of the strength of the movement that most of these leaders were young men, even younger than Dr. Clark, and were able to devote their lives to the extension of the movement.³⁶⁷

³⁶⁵ Ibid.

³⁶⁶ Ibid., 60–61.

³⁶⁷ Clark and Clark, *A Son's Portrait of Dr. Francis E. Clark.*, 163.

The conventions had found an identity in gathering Christian Endeavor leaders and representatives for inspirational speeches, sharing of best practices, reminders of common vision and for Endeavor business.

The sixth convention, held in Saratoga, New York, was significant, with an enrollment of 2,000 delegates, for it was there that Clark was elected President of United Society, a position he would hold for thirty-eight years.³⁶⁸ “With Saratoga the conventions ceased to be small gatherings, and the period of assemblies began when halls sufficiently large could not be obtained, and the principal meetings had to be scheduled in tents seating 10,000. Dr. Clark was the central figure in all these conventions but despite their tremendous growth he was able to maintain and even enlarge the atmosphere of devotion and spiritual fervor that has always characterized them.”³⁶⁹ Clark would understand a key part of his role as President to guide these conventions and use them to continue to bring unity to Christian Endeavor.

As the annual conventions began to grow in size, people began to feel a need to meet more regularly and closer to home. Smaller conventions among areas, regions or specific countries began to spring up. “It must also be remembered that while Dr. Clark was the central figure in the annual and biennial conventions for a period of forty-seven years, he was also constantly in attendance at smaller gatherings of state, city, or district conventions in the United States and foreign countries, reference to which cannot be wholly omitted.”³⁷⁰ All of this traveling, speaking, writing and convention attending was

³⁶⁸ Ibid., 164.

³⁶⁹ Ibid., 165.

³⁷⁰ Ibid., 171.

not a bother for Clark. He enjoyed the time with people advancing the cause of the church and Christ. After one particularly full travel season Clark noted,

In five days I spent forty-two hours in Conventions, but there was not a wearisome or a monotonous hour among them, because, though the general purpose of the meetings and the topics discussed were the same, the living links in the Christian Endeavor chain were so full of life, enthusiasm, and spiritual energy that no one who had not a heart of stone could help rejoicing continuously. Thank God for the 'tie that binds,' for the chain of living Endeavor that encircles the world.³⁷¹

In addition to being the first convention held outside the United States, the convention in Montreal in 1893 was also the first time Clark gave a keynote address to the convention that would be the work of the Society for the coming year. Clark would utilize this keynote in the coming years to share vision and unify the movement.

In Montreal significant opposition arose to the convention due to one of the foreign speakers equating Catholicism to Hinduism. There was an organized attack on the main tent, but police and the fire department were able to break things up.³⁷² This rare public opposition received some press in the local papers.

The Christian Endeavor conventions continued to grow, moving from the smaller venues of Portland, Lowell, Ocean Park and Saratoga to the larger cities and halls of Chicago, Philadelphia, St. Louis, Minneapolis, New York, Montreal, Cleveland and Boston. "The imagination of the country was first caught by the numbers attending the convention in New York in 1892 when 25,000 delegates made a decided impression on the life of the metropolis. But the climax, so far as numbers were concerned, was reached

³⁷¹ Chaplin, *Francis E. Clark : Founder of the Y.P.S.C.E.*, 82.

³⁷² Clark and Clark, *A Son's Portrait of Dr. Francis E. Clark.*, 165.

at Boston in 1895, when over 56,000 were actually registered.”³⁷³ This huge gathering Boston was the largest Christian Endeavor convention ever.

In Boston, the only real public controversy occurred when one of the speeches became somewhat political around the issue of Prohibition. Dr. Clark was distressed by the intrusion of politics to the convention, and while remaining silent publicly on the matter, sought to remove that from any future conventions.³⁷⁴ Clark did deal with the situation behind closed doors. This would be the only real public controversy at the conventions in Clark’s lifetime. This bothered Clark immensely because it became public and because it seemed to remain a story for long time. Clark continually talked about unity and sought to make the conventions a place focused solely on Christ and the work of young people in the church. He fought against any one political view or party being lifted up in any way over another.

In 1921 the convention was back in New York. Concerning this, Eugene Clark wrote:

Probably the feature of the 1921 convention which most impressed itself on the delegates and the city alike was the parade along Fifth Avenue to Central Park. In this parade which was conducted with unusual precision and dispatch, Dr. And Mrs. Clark rode with William Jennings Bryan, and at the Sheep Meadow in the Park, Mr. Bryan addressed the thousands assembled in the demonstration to advance good citizenship. A parade of this type has been a feature of each convention since 1921.³⁷⁵

This public demonstration of Christian Endeavor left a lasting impression on the city and its people.

³⁷³ Ibid., 166.

³⁷⁴ Ibid., 167.

³⁷⁵ Ibid., 168–169.

From Clark's journal:

As you saw in the papers the convention was a great success, 16,000 registered and paid delegates, and 20,000 to 25,000 in attendance. Bryan was in his best form, and the parade up Fifth Avenue was a huge success, each state delegation marching by itself, and in costume, with floats representing Pilgrim's Progress, etc. It far out-did in beauty, and most people said size, the wet parade on the Fourth.³⁷⁶

The first convention outside of the United States was the 1893 convention in Montreal. However, Clark and Christian Endeavor realized their growing impact around the world. Clark's travels indicate his knowledge and embrace of the growing diversity. Increasingly people from around the world began to attend the conventions and there was a call for a World Wide Convention.

The desire to reach the world was not in place from the beginning. As previously stated, Clark did not set out to start a movement, he only desired to reach the young people in his church and his town. As travel became more of an option and as his "silent missionaries", his writings, reached a more global audience, he began to gain a vision for a larger impact. At the 10th convention Clark reflects both his growing vision and the vision of other Christian Endeavor leaders:

Yet, let me say that I also appreciate most heartily the intention of the Committee of '91, as I understand, to make this more and more a world-wide movement; and I think I can assure them, in behalf of the Trustees of the United Society, that we will do everything that we can, consistently with Christian Endeavor principles, to make this during the coming year more than ever a world-wide movement, that we will mark this beginning of the second decade of Christian Endeavor by making more strenuous efforts to send the glad message around all the world.³⁷⁷

The two results of this initiative were increased travel by Clark around the world and the

³⁷⁶ Ibid., 174.

³⁷⁷ *Tenth Annual Conference of the Young People's Society of Christian Endeavor: Held at Minneapolis, Minn., July 9 to 12, 1891* (Boston: United Society of Christian Endeavor, 1891), 150.

formation of the World Christian Endeavor Union.

The formation of a world-wide network is recorded in the conventions. As Clark had begun his global travels and Christian Endeavor was proving fruitful in many places, the needs for connection grew. He explains at the 13th convention in Cleveland:

The suggestion has come from Australia, and has been seconded by England and China and India and Japan, of a World's Christian Endeavor Union, made up of individuals in all lands that believe in the Christian Endeavor ideas, and will stand with us on the broad platform of Endeavor principles, a platform of thorough loyalty to our own churches and of hearty co-operation one with another.

In my opinion the time has come for such an alliance, which will link many Christians of many nations together in ties of fellowship that they have never before known... In substance and essence we have a world's union now; its more formal establishment would but make plain that to oppose the common enemy, to work for our common Lord, we stand together in Christian Endeavor.³⁷⁸

Clark's relationships would lead him to be chosen President of this organization as well. At the 14th convention in Boston a world's committee was formed, Clark was chosen President and the World's Union became a reality. It was decided that triennial World's Conventions would be held, with the first the following year in Washington.³⁷⁹ The significance of recognizing and empowering Christian Endeavorers around the world was not lost on Clark and the convention. The author of the 14th convention report states,

No student of the Christian Endeavor movement will fail to see the immense significance of this step. Hitherto the United Society of Christian Endeavor of the United States has directed the movement, first appointing superintendents of Christian Endeavor societies in foreign lands, and then, as the societies multiplied, allowing them to form their own United Societies of Christian Endeavor virtually independent of the mother organization. Thus were formed the United Societies of Christian Endeavor of China, Japan, England and Australia. This loose system is

³⁷⁸ *Thirteenth International Conference of the Young People's Society of Christian Endeavor: Cleveland, Ohio, July 11-15, 1894* (Boston: United Society of Christian Endeavor, 1894), 81.

³⁷⁹ *Fourteenth International Conference of the Young People's Society of Christian Endeavor: Held in Mechanics' Building and in Two Tents Pitched on Boston Common, Boston, Mass., July 10-15, 1895* (Boston, MA: United Society of Christian Endeavor, 1895), 6.

now to be changed for a compact body, which will have all the enthusiasm and power that come from a welding of forces, the close touch of shoulder to shoulder. May God bless the World's Union of Christian Endeavor!³⁸⁰

From sixty people in Portland, Maine to a globally recognized movement in fourteen years through writing, travel and organization, Clark's Christian Endeavor was changing the way the church viewed young people and ministry. The first World Christian Endeavor Union met in Washington at the 15th Christian Endeavor Convention and the first ever World's Convention.³⁸¹

As previously mentioned Clark saw the importance of the World's Convention in London in 1900 and made tremendous effort to be there. The World's Convention in 1900 at London was attended by 50,000 representatives from every continent.³⁸² This large turn out from such a variety of locations on foreign soil was significant in the life of Christian Endeavor World-wide.

From London, the next gathering of the World's Union would be in Geneva, Switzerland in 1906. Clark would continue to travel and connect people together around the world.

The World's Christian Endeavor Convention in 1909 was held in Agra, India and Clark traveled around the world to be there. When he arrived he found that the Vice-regal government had erected a giant encampment of meeting tents which had been moved almost a thousand miles from Calcutta and placed in Macdonald Park just a quarter mile from the Taj Mahal. The attendance was remarkable with more than 4,000 native

³⁸⁰ Ibid.

³⁸¹ *Fifteenth International Conference of the Young People's Society of Christian Endeavor: Held in Central Hall, Tent Williston, Tent Washington, Tent Endeavor, and the Churches, Washington, D.C., July 8-13, 1896*, 312.

delegates and four hundred missionaries present along with representatives from a dozen foreign countries.³⁸³

Clark, writing in the shadow of Taj Mahal:

The convention was as strenuous as an American International, and almost as large. Thousands of people lived in the convention encampment in three or four hundred tents. The camp is now breaking up and 12,000 pieces of furniture have to be carried out on coolies' heads. The convention was a wonderful success, far better than we expected, in numbers and everything else. Money was raised for 21 more native Indian Christian Endeavor secretaries, most of whom will have \$75 a year for their rice and curry.³⁸⁴

Table 3: Listing of Conventions in Clark's lifetime

- 1st Portland 1882
- 2nd Portland 1883
- 3rd Lowell 1884
- 4th Ocean Park 1885
- 5th Saratoga 1886
- 6th Saratoga 1887
- 7th Chicago 1888
- 8th Philadelphia 1889
- 9th St. Louis 1890
- 10th Minneapolis 1891
- 11th New York 1892
- 12th Montreal 1893

³⁸² Chaplin, *Francis E. Clark : Founder of the Y.P.S.C.E.*, 92.

³⁸³ *Ibid.*, 82–83.

³⁸⁴ Clark and Clark, *A Son's Portrait of Dr. Francis E. Clark.*, 177.

13th Cleveland 1894
14th Boston 1895
15th Washington DC 1896
16th San Francisco 1897
17th Nashville 1898
18th Detroit 1899
19th London 1900 World's Convention
20th Cincinnati 1901
21st Denver 1903
22nd Baltimore 1905
23rd Seattle 1907
24th St. Paul 1909
25th Atlantic City 1911
26th Los Angeles 1913
27th Chicago 1915
28th New York 1921
29th Des Moines 1923
30th Portland 1925

World Conventions:

1. 1896 Washington, D.C.
2. 1900 London, England

3. 1906 Geneva Switzerland
4. 1909 Agra, India
5. 1915 Chicago
6. 1921 New York
7. 1926 London

The conventions played a variety of roles for Christian Endeavor. People always reported encouragement from attending the conventions and experiencing the energy that came with being a part of a large gathering. The conventions were also a great place to share best practices and to find others with similar contexts and issues. The conventions were also a place for people to unify in the vision of Christian Endeavor as continually communicated throughout the gathering, especially by Francis Clark.

The conventions were held annually until 1901 and then on a biennial basis except for the interruption in 1917 due to the War. At all of these gatherings Dr. Clark was present and the central figure, except for those held in Baltimore and Cleveland, when illness prevented. Mrs. Clark was also present at practically all of these conventions, and frequently had a place in the program.³⁸⁵

Christian Endeavor grew beyond the greatest expectations of Clark and any other leaders. It had successfully bridged the gap between Sunday School and church membership. It had engaged the young people of the church in meaningful memory. Following the lead of Clark's writing, being supported by his global travel, and unifying at conventions, Christian Endeavor rapidly grew and flourished around the world.

If you've ever assembled more than one person in a room, even if for a specific and unified purpose, you know that keeping people united and focused is not easy. Clark

³⁸⁵ Ibid., 168.

faced opposition. Christian Endeavor had its critics. Diverse people from different denominations and theological traditions from around the world were involved. How did Clark keep Christian Endeavor unified?

Chapter 8: Organization

Any organization changes over time. Often religious organizations struggle after a few years to continue growth. Yet Christian Endeavor saw continued growth from its inception through Clark's resignation as President. The organization that started as one chapter of a Young People's Society of Christian Endeavor in Portland, Maine, grew in size, complexity and diversity until at his resignation it had twenty million current and former members, over four million current members, about eighty thousand societies, existing in almost every country, and had birthed a separate global organization, the World Christian Endeavor Union.³⁸⁶ How did this pastor keep the movement growing and unified? His organizational skills, his ability to adapt and innovate and his deep commitment to continually communicate the vision of Christian Endeavor were significant factors in Clark growing as the leader along with the organization.

As has been mentioned, Clark was elected President of Christian Endeavor at the 6th convention in Saratoga in 1887. Clark humbly and perhaps excitedly reports in his journal about that convention, "July 7. The greatest day yet. Twelve hundred at the early morning prayer meeting. The enthusiasm keeps up to the end of forty on their feet trying to give a testimony. In the morning they chose me President of the United Society of Christian Endeavor. The Convention ratifies the choices of the trustees very

³⁸⁶ "Well-Loved Religious Leader Reaches End of Road," *The Front Rank News* 2, no. 24 (June 12, 1927): 1.

enthusiastically.”³⁸⁷ Clark was also selected the editor-in-chief of the newly acquired society paper, *The Golden Rule*.

It would have been difficult to make a case for someone else better equipped to lead Christian Endeavor at this point. “Dr. Clark was peculiarly fitted for both these offices. He had inherited literary ability from his mother, and had had some journalistic experience of *The Dartmouth*, a college magazine. Then his position as founder of the Movement led multitudes of people to look to him for advice in the formation of new societies and the maintenance of old ones.”³⁸⁸ His experience in the “trenches” of Christian Endeavor formation and running his own societies, both at Williston and later in Boston at Park Street Church, helped people trust his advice and direction. His ability to communicate, through both writing and speaking, made him a great spokesperson and face of the organization.

Clark struggled a bit with this new calling. He saw himself as a pastor and knew that he was effective and valued in that role. He had only come to Phillips Church four years before, things were going well and he was not looking for another change. “During Dr. Clark’s four years at Phillips Church he received on an average about fifty new members a year into the Church from the society, altogether about four hundred; and some of ‘the bad boys in the back seats’ later became earnest able ministers of the gospel.”³⁸⁹ Guiding Christian Endeavor and its work at Phillips Church was clearly his passion and gift and Clark was able to use its success to grow the church and its

³⁸⁷ Clark and Clark, *A Son’s Portrait of Dr. Francis E. Clark*, 99.

³⁸⁸ Chaplin, *Francis E. Clark : Founder of the Y.P.S.C.E.*, 42–43.

³⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 40.

leadership. “The usefulness of this society (at Phillips Church), and Dr. Clark’s growing reputation as an earnest and successful minister, both helped to advocate the new Movement, and enthusiastic workers gathered about him, amongst them Mr. William Shaw, who later became the treasurer of the United Society.”³⁹⁰ Being effective in this way surely made it difficult to know how to proceed upon his election.

Clark’s acceptance of the presidency was not without some thought and prayer by both him and the trustees. The condition for Clark to take the presidency as put forth by the Trustees was his adoption of the following foundational principles, which became the platform of the society:

First, the society was not to be independent of the church but an integral part of it. Second: it was to be undenominational. Third: the purely religious features must be paramount. Fourth: it must sympathize with all true moral reforms, with wise philanthropic measures and with missions at home and abroad. Fifth: it must be managed economically, with no larger number of paid agents or Christian Endeavor missionaries; and Sixth: the officers must have the sympathetic support of state and local unions.³⁹¹

Clark was happy to accept these conditions and would use these conditions as a framework for his ongoing leadership work.

Later in 1887, Clark feels more clear about his calling: “It looks much as though I should have to take up Christian Endeavor as a life work.”³⁹² He recognized the need to transition to Christian Endeavor full-time and resigned the pastorate at Phillips.

In his resignation speech:

And yet, when I have said all this, and thought there is much more in my heart that I would say concerning the importance of the work before Phillips Church, I

³⁹⁰ Ibid.

³⁹¹ Clark and Clark, *A Son’s Portrait of Dr. Francis E. Clark.*, 101–102.

³⁹² Ibid., 99.

feel that I must ask you to release me that I may take up a yet larger work.

I feel as though this call had come not only from the 2,500 societies and the 150,000 young people who compose them, but from Him who from the beginning has guided the movement as we believe, upbuilding and strengthening of the churches, and I cannot disregard it. Did I not believe that through this society I could do more than in any other way for the Church of Christ, I would not for a moment think of undertaking this work. The last two months have been given largely to a careful and prayerful consideration of this question.³⁹³

The Phillips Church valued him as a pastor but were able to see Clark's calling. In accepting his resignation they stated:

As the years have come and gone, it (the church) has been glad to recognize his rare and genial nature, touched as it is by the very spirit of the Master, his genuine sincerity, his profound earnestness, his perfect transparency of character, a real spiritual ambition amounting almost to a passion for helping and saving men; and with these a balance and symmetry of character which, taken together, have gained him universal love and respect.

It would bear witness to his tireless labor, his skill in dealing with difficult problems, his fertility of resource, his power for organization and leadership, combined with a modest and retiring spirit; his clear perception and knowledge of men, and all sanctified and given, without stint to the Master's service.

And further, we cannot forbear to dwell upon the upright life which has been lived in this community, above reproach or question, given to utter self-abnegation, the almost ideal pastor, the grand results attained in the large accessions to our membership, and a united, harmonious church.³⁹⁴

Christian Endeavor had a new president and Clark was fully committed. He would begin applying "his power for organization and leadership" right away. The choice of Clark as President would prove to be a great one.

Clark brought to the Presidency an organizational clarity that would guide the movement through much growth and a changing global environment. Clearly influenced

³⁹³ Ibid., 100.

³⁹⁴ Ibid., 101.

by the organizational power of the time period, Clark harnessed his administrative powers to move the society forward. Clark's humility came out of a deep seated conviction that it was divine direction that birthed and grew the movement. Add to that Clark's unfaltering belief in young people and their potential, it would then make sense that Clark saw the role of Christian Endeavor to be to train young people for service to Christ and the church. Clark also held firmly to the belief that the only function of the unified movement was to help communicate with local societies the core values of the movement and to share best practices. Clark held on to these convictions to provide clarity in organizing Christian Endeavor.

Divine Influence

Francis Clark was a central figure in the growth and global expansion of Christian Endeavor. However, he never sought praise or to be recognized for this growth. He always pointed to God's influence in the movement for any of its success. This message was carried throughout his life.

From the report of the first convention:

One society in this city, organized by a very few members, has been the means, *under God* [emphasis added], of bringing into the church eighty young men and women, within a few months, when there had been no additions before for two years. This is not an exceptional case, for wherever these societies have been organized, the young people have shown a remarkable readiness to assume active Christian duties and church fellowship.³⁹⁵

This constant affirmation of divine presence weaves its way through all of Clark's descriptions of Christian Endeavor. The following quotes illustrate Clark's recognition of God's work in the movement:

From the very first, *the blessing of our God* [emphasis added] was manifestly with

³⁹⁵ Clark et al., "First Convention Report Letter."

the Society. The growth *in grace* [emphasis added] was so marked that by the end of the first year, it was no longer an experiment. In June of 1882, it was thought best to have a meeting of all interested in the work, and a notice to that effect brought delegates from four societies, and a written report from one other. So far as we know, these were all the societies organized. The rapid growth and interest in the work encouraged our hearts, and the afternoon and evening was spent with profit in the discussion of "Our Work".³⁹⁶

Let me tell you the great problem which has confronted us during the past year, and, which, during the coming years, will assume larger and larger dimensions. It is this: *How to so guide this mighty agency, which God has raised up in our land, that it shall promote to the utmost personal piety among our members, and the prosperity of the Church for which it lives* [emphasis original]. The very size of the society and marvelous rapidity of its growth pressed this problem upon us. Before we knew it, a score of delicate questions, all arising from our rapid growth, were demanding settlement.³⁹⁷

"From the beginning to the present day it is a conspicuous example of the providential aspects of the whole movement. It came because of *God's call* [emphasis mine]. It had to come."³⁹⁸

"The *Providence that began this work and continued it and has made it what it is* [emphasis mine], is as plain as the sun in the July heavens. He would be monumental in conceit, or else afflicted with mental and spiritual strabismus of the very worst kind, who should for a moment doubt this."³⁹⁹

"As such a movement develops, we can see many reasons for its existence, all,

³⁹⁶ *Third Annual Conference of the Young People's Societies Fo Christian Endeavor: Held at the Kirk Street Congregational Church, Lowell, Mass., October 23,24, 1884, with Papers Read at the Conference.* (Lowell, Mass: Campbell &Hanscom, Book and Job Printers, 1884), 22.

³⁹⁷ *Seventh Annual Conference of the Young People's Society of Christian Endeavor: Held in Battery D Armory, Chicago, Ill., Thursday, Friday, Saturday, and Sunday, July 5,6,7 and 8, 1888, with Papers Read at the Conference*, 50.

³⁹⁸ *Eighth Annual Conference of the Young People's Society of Christian Endeavor* (Boston, MA: United Society of Christian Endeavor, 1889), 53.

³⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 43.

doubtless, embraced in the *divine plan* [emphasis mine], such as the promotion of outspoken discipleship, the increase of faith in youthful piety, the development of well trained workmen for the church, and the increased respect paid to covenant vows...”⁴⁰⁰

It is always to be borne in mind that no ecclesiastical authority called the Christian Endeavor Society into being. No council of the Fathers decreed it. No assembly or conference said it must come. This society had the same quiet origin as the Sunday school, the missionary movement, and the temperance crusade. The world cared nothing for the beginning of any of these efforts. It knew no more of the beginning than a busy city knows about or cares for the dropping of an acorn in the forest. Ah, but there is life in the acorn and it grows. There was *divine life* [emphasis mine] in this Christian Endeavor seed, and it grew. That is its history in an single sentence. Man may build a house; God builds a tree. Man may start a society; *God* [emphasis mine] starts a movement.⁴⁰¹

Again, the adaptability of this society proclaims it to be not a manufactured article, but *God's method* [emphasis mine] of reaching young hearts. A mere society might be fitted to one climate and totally unfitted to another; it might flourish in one denomination and utterly wither in another. A mere society is necessarily local and inflexible. A former honored president of the New York Union framed an epigram which will live, when he said, ‘The Christian Endeavor Society is as strong as steel and as flexible as ribbon.’⁴⁰²

Others recognized the work to be more than just the leadership of one man.

Theodore Cuyler, who had significant influence on Clark and who also was very invested in reaching young people stated in 1894,

This admirable movement has already survived the peril of being a ‘novelty.’ There is a cemetery for religious and benevolent enterprises just at the point where novelty dies out, and plenty of them have had Christian burial in that ‘potter’s field.’ By God’s good guidance and rich blessing the Christian Endeavorers have left that fatal spot far behind, and are marching on, two million

⁴⁰⁰ *Tenth Annual Conference of the Young People's Society of Christian Endeavor: Held at Minneapolis, Minn., July 9 to 12, 1891*, 25.

⁴⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 86.

⁴⁰² *Eleventh Annual Conference of the Young People's Society of Christian Endeavor: Held in Madison Square Garden, New York City, July 7 to 10, 1892, with Report of Simultaneous and Overflow Meetings* (Boston: United Society of Christian Endeavor, 1892), 88.

strong. May the societies live on, to march into the millennial morning with colors flying and the dear name of the Crucified on every ensign.⁴⁰³

More from Clark over the years of his leadership:

Judged by all standards it is no innocent statement that the Endeavor movement is a success. An organization which in fourteen years has grown from one society to forty thousand, from fifty-six members to nearly two million and a half; an organization that has belted the globe, that finds itself as much at home in Old England as in New England, under the Southern Cross as under the North Star, under the Dragon flag of China as under the Stars and Stripes of America, can claim surely to be no provincial and temporary expedient, but a *world-wide, providential movement* [emphasis mine].⁴⁰⁴

“The seed is the Christian Endeavor idea, - small, indeed, at first, and insignificant as a grain of mustard-seed, but potent because in it was the *life of God* [emphasis mine].”⁴⁰⁵

“Plainly our mission is to furnish for the evangelical Christian world these training-schools in expression, in service, in brotherhood. The history of these years proves it. *God has marked out our path* [emphasis mine]. Keep on, then, in His way.”⁴⁰⁶

Recounting the growth and impact of Christian Endeavor, Clark states, “Surely this is another miracle of the loaves and fishes. This is a mighty underscoring of the age-old

⁴⁰³ Clark, *Christian Endeavor in All Lands*, 42.

⁴⁰⁴ *Fourteenth International Conference of the Young People's Society of Christian Endeavor: Held in Mechanics' Building and in Two Tents Pitched on Boston Common, Boston, Mass., July 10-15, 1895*, 138.

⁴⁰⁵ *Seventeenth International Conference of the Young People's Society of Christian Endeavor: Held in the Auditorium Endeavor and Hall Williston, Centennial Park, and in the Gospel Tabernacle and Many Churches* (Boston: United Society of Christian Endeavor, 1898), 62.

⁴⁰⁶ *Twenty-Third International Christian Endeavor Convention: Held in Tent Williston and Other Auditoriums and Churches, Seattle, Wash., July 10-15, 1907* (Boston: United Society of Christian Endeavor, 1907), 22.

truth, 'Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit saith the Lord.'"⁴⁰⁷

Again, in his autobiography Clark is clear about where the credit for the movement's success should go:

I am particularly impressed in my devotional moments with God's undeserved goodness in giving me my special work in the world. Realizing my Lamentations of intellect and soul, I wonder that He called me to start, and in some measure to develop, the work of the Christian Endeavor society. I see hundreds of my brother ministers more eloquent, more witty, more gifted in many ways than I. Why were they not chosen? Thousands of them were thinking along the same lines of Christian nurture in the early eighties. Why did He not give this honor to one of them? Why was the little experiment in Williston Church His chosen way of influencing millions in all lands for good?

This is no mock humility. The undeserved eulogies with which I am sometimes introduced on the platform, often make me cringe and cover my face, for I realize, as no one else can, how small has really been my part, and how all-embracing God's part has been in fitting the cause to the time, and in commissioning a multitude of young men and women for the special tasks He has given them through Christin Endeavor. Every month He has opened new doors; every month He has called young leaders to enter them, and they have responded, "Lord, here am I, send me!"⁴⁰⁸

Youth as Leaders

Clark was clearly a faithful believer in God's work through himself and through other Godly leaders. In addition to this, Clark was a strong advocate for young people. He believed in their potential as leaders even though they were young. He wanted to give them the thing he felt was often missing for them in the church: opportunities to lead.

He may not have been sure when things started. He had tried other things that were less serious and asked for less from young people. But Clark would learn from his

⁴⁰⁷ *Twenty-Eighth International Christian Endeavor Convention: Held in the 71st Regiment Armory and Many Churches, New York City, N.Y., July 6 to 11, 1921* (Boston: United Society of Christian Endeavor, 1921), 24.

⁴⁰⁸ Clark, *Memories of Many Men in Many Lands; an Autobiography*, 691–692.

first experiment. “He was afraid that its strenuous covenant would not commend it to the young people, that they would be afraid of its strictly religious character, that they would not find enough of the oyster-supper and “pink-tea” element in it to win their approval; but ever since his weak faith and lack of knowledge of young hearts have been rebuked by their acceptance of this constitution and by the loyal adherence to it of millions of like-minded youth.”⁴⁰⁹ Clark learned a valuable lesson that day about the seriousness and capability of young people. Clark would go on to openly embrace this kind of Christian nurture for the young.

From the report from the first convention that Clark would send to others interested, we read: “We do not claim to have conceived a perfect plan of Christian culture, or one that will succeed without constant labor and earnest prayer. We only offer one method of setting young Christian at work while their souls are all alive with love for Jesus, and when perhaps the doors of some churches might be closed to them on account of their age.”⁴¹⁰ Clark clearly believed young people were capable of leading. He saw himself as “...a worker who has spent all his years among the young, who believes in young people, who trusts young people, who expects great things from young people, and who expectations have been rarely disappointed.”⁴¹¹

The first assumption for Clark is that young people could become Christians. The second was that they could serve and lead in the church.

It starts on the principle that a child, through the influence of the Spirit of God,

⁴⁰⁹ Clark, *Christian Endeavor in All Lands*, 36.

⁴¹⁰ Clark et al., “First Convention Report Letter.”

⁴¹¹ Clark, *Training the Church of the Future; Auburn Seminary Lectures on Christian Nurture with Special Reference to the Young People’s Society of Christian Endeavor as a Training-school of the Church*, 14.

may become a Christian very early. It proceeds upon the principle that he needs special watchfulness, care and training to make him strong and serviceable in the household of God. Account for it as we may, there has been a sad lack in the home training and the church training of young Christians. The lack has not been so much in the line of instruction as in the line of practice, and earnest Christian effort suited to a youth's or child's experience and capacities.⁴¹²

Clark believed that there was something special about this age of adolescence, the period between childhood and adulthood, where God could and often did work in significant ways.

It is particularly interesting to note what modern psychologists have demonstrated: that there is an age when God peculiarly opens the doors of the spiritual world to the eager soul, and that is the period of adolescence with which we in these lectures have particularly to do - the period between childhood and maturity, between boyhood and manhood, between girlhood and womanhood; the "place where the brook and river meet."⁴¹³

So Clark set out to make opportunities for young people to lead. The first prayer meeting was led by twenty-two year old Granville Staples. The second was led by Henry B. Pennell, the eleven year-old-son of the first signer of the constitution.⁴¹⁴ Christian Endeavor would be a place where the young people would be expected to lead; a place that valued young people.

As has been said, not only were the youngest and most inexperienced young people expected to take part in the meeting, but they were expected to lead it as well; and this leadership of the weak proved by no means weak leadership, for with redoubled readiness and earnestness the others would rally to the help of their inexperienced and sometimes sadly flustered companions; and all would pronounce this meeting at the end the very best of all.⁴¹⁵

⁴¹² *Second Annual Conference of the Young People's Society of Christian Endeavor: Held at the Payson Memorial Church, Portland, ME, June 7th, 1883* (Burlington, Vermont: H.S. Styles, Steam Book and Job Printer, 1883), 4.

⁴¹³ Clark, *Training the Church of the Future; Auburn Seminary Lectures on Christian Nurture with Special Reference to the Young People's Society of Christian Endeavor as a Training-school of the Church*, 22.

⁴¹⁴ Clark, *World Wide Endeavor: the Story of the Young People's Society of Christian Endeavor, from the Beginning and in All Lands*, 71-72.

⁴¹⁵ Clark, *Christian Endeavor in All Lands*, 47.

Clark believed any young person could serve and lead. Clark encouraged the church to accept young people and their leadership despite the perceptions of the broader society.

The proof of this reality are in the results, “It succeeded beyond the expectations of its founders; the young people were faithful to their vows, enthusiastic in their support of their meetings, far more devoted than ever before to the interests of the church, and willing to be guided by the larger experience of pastor and older friends, while the Society rendered the practical oversight and guardianship of the Young Christians possible and easy.”⁴¹⁶

For Clark, Christian Endeavor proved a way for all churches to value, train and engage the young people in the work of the church. He definitely saw the church’s perceptions of young people as one of the main contributors to the problem of young people leaving the church or not learning to lead in the church.

Conventionality, timidity, bashfulness, the tradition of the elders, who relegated the young people to a back seat had practically sealed the lips of the young Protestant Christians of the world; and they were growing up without the inestimable privilege of expressing their love for Christ, an expression which is of itself an education.

The pledge, always voluntarily taken, came to the rescue to unseal their lips, to touch dumb tongues as with a coal from the altar of God; and our sons and our daughters began to prophecy as in the days of Pentecost. While we do not insist on the use of this formula or any other special form of words, I venture to say that the little phrase, ‘I will take some part aside from singing in every prayer meeting,’ has done more to restore the idea of the healthy expression of the religious life to its normal place in the church of Christ than any other twelve words that have been uttered or written, simply because they have brought into this training-class of expression so many millions of conscientious scholars.⁴¹⁷

⁴¹⁶ *Second Annual Conference of the Young People’s Society of Christian Endeavor: Held at the Payson Memorial Church, Portland, ME, June 7th, 1883, 3.*

⁴¹⁷ *Twenty-Third International Christian Endeavor Convention: Held in Tent Williston and Other Auditoriums and Churches, Seattle, Wash., July 10-15, 1907, 20.*

Clark would wind up fighting against the negative perceptions of young people his whole life. In his last convention, where he retired permanently from the United Society, Clark states:

Terrible wails are heard on all sides about the youth of today. Says the critic, 'They are vain, self-conceited, frivolous, morally callous; their hip-pockets bulge; the "cigarette with fire at one end and young fool at the other" is typical for our boys.' I am quoting what others say, I do not believe it myself.

Of course what the cynic says is true of some; but I believe that religion and religious service are supremely attractive to most young people, when rightly presented. The whole history of Christian Endeavor proves it.⁴¹⁸

The role of Christian Endeavor for Clark was to train the young people "for Christ and for the church". This would remain the core impulse of the movement throughout his lifetime. This would also guide many of the decisions Clark made in terms of adaptations and organizational adjustments.

Training and Nurture

From the very beginning Clark saw the training element of Christian Endeavor the thing that made it unique and sustainable. He wrote in the report on the first convention:

Dear Brother: - Last June a permanent organization of the various societies of Christian Endeavor was effected in Williston church, Portland, and a yearly conference of the societies was provided for, in the hope that systematic effort for the conversion of the young might be thereby promoted. So many inquiries from various quarters have been received concerning this work that we take the liberty of sending you this circular, suggesting some practical methods of Christian nurture adopted by "The Young People's Society of Christian Endeavor," thinking you may possibly desire to adopt in your own church, either this same agency, or some similar plan, so that being united in the same work we might all labor together more efficiently for the conversion and training of the young...

The official work is divided between the Prayer Meeting Committee, the Lookout

⁴¹⁸ *Thirtieth International Christian Endeavor Convention: Held in Portland, Oregon, July 4 to 10, 1925, 62.*

Committee, and the Social Committee. These, if composed of devoted Christians, will make these societies nurseries of the church indeed, for it is ever held up to be the end and aim of all training, to become members of some church of Christ.⁴¹⁹

For Clark this idea that young people within the church should be nurtured into faith was an important missing element. As before mentioned, Horace Bushnell played a big role in this understanding and aim:

But, alas! The third element of religious growth among the young, the warm, genial, all-embracing atmosphere of good will and interest in their work, has not always been found in the Christian church. In fact, until within the last half-century little has been thought of them or their needs. The idea of conquest from without dominated the church, rather than the thought of growth from within. The minister and evangelist sought to turn the calloused feet of hardened sinners into the way of truth rather than the tender feet of the little child. The thought of the church as an army rather than a home, or as a hospital for the decrepit and the diseased rather than as a nursery, dominated the religious thought of the centuries; and it was not until Bushnell wrote his epoch-making book on Christian nurture that the modern religious world began to see that there must be training from within, as well as conquest from without, if the church was to hold her own, and win the world to her standards.⁴²⁰

Christian nurture became a central focus of Christian Endeavor. It started with the idea that children can accept Christ at a young age and that they could grow up in the church and in their faith. They did not need a dramatic conversion experience after they had lived frivolously. They could be nurtured in their Christian faith throughout their lives.

But here is the secret: The Society in every part, in pledge and prayer-meeting, in its committees and all its activities, is based on these principles. The young Christian has implanted within him something of devotion to the highest ideals and a desire to attain them. The very words “conversion” and “Christian” are empty and meaningless unless this is true. This devotion must find expression in word and deed. “No impression without expression,” is the latest word of the

⁴¹⁹ Clark et al., “First Convention Report Letter.”

⁴²⁰ Clark, *Christian Endeavor in All Lands*, 20.

psychologist. Reduced to ordinary phrase, the young Christian to grow in grace must practise the Christian graces. He must give out as well as receive. He must exercise as well as eat. He must not be ashamed of his religion, or unwilling to sacrifice himself for his Master. The Christian Endeavor Society simply says: "I will show these young Christians how they may work and how they may speak for Him whom they have begun to serve. I will provide an easy and natural channel for the expression by word and deed of their religious life."⁴²¹

This is not to say that Clark believed in Christian nurture to the exclusion of evangelism.

In his lectures at Auburn Theological Seminary entitled, "Training the Church of the Future", Clark stated: "Yet it is not altogether fair thus to separate these two methods of building up the Kingdom - growth and conquest. Even in the youngest heart there is conquest, as well as growth; in the oldest and most hardened there must be growth after the period of conquest. The difference of method seems to be greater than it really is."⁴²² He would often refer to both as parts of Christian Endeavor. The nurture would happen through the training and leadership opportunities for youth. The evangelism would come through the committee work, reaching out to their peers.

At the second convention Clark is focused in making the role of training in Christian Endeavor as a focus.

The Society of Christian Endeavor aims to accomplish for the *training* of the youthful convert in the Christian life what the Sunday (School) accomplishes for his *instruction* in the Christian life." (2nd 4) This was to be an immediate response to a young person expressing faith in Christ. Christian Endeavor would create an intentional way for young people to embrace and live out their faith. "The society is also a training school in the church. *It gives the young Christian something to do at once.*"⁴²³

⁴²¹ Ibid., 55–56.

⁴²² Clark, *Training the Church of the Future; Auburn Seminary Lectures on Christian Nurture with Special Reference to the Young People's Society of Christian Endeavor as a Training-school of the Church.*, 17.

⁴²³ *Fourth Annual Conference of the Young People's Society of Christian Endeavor: Held at Ocean Park, Old Orchard, Maine, July 8 and 9, 1885, with Papers at the Conference* (Lynn, Mass.: Lewis & Winship Printers, 1885), 47.

He continued to echo this throughout his term as president. At the seventh convention Clark put forward four duties of the society: 1) “further vigorous advancement of our society in all proper ways”; 2) “to spread the society in its purity”; 3) “to accomplish all this at a small expense”; and 4) “the training of the individual members for usefulness in the church.”⁴²⁴ Clark continued to emphasize this everywhere he went. The more Clark wrote about and spoke about this role, the clearer he became.

Ours must never cease to be a *young people’s* society, however many older people are connected with it. There ought to be twice as many Junior societies, and ten times as many Intermediate societies as there are. It should be the business of us older Endeavorers to see that every boy and girl between seven and twenty in our church is reached by Endeavor methods. Some of these (shall I speak bluntly?) are growing too long-winded in the weekly prayer meeting. We are doing too much of the work on the committees, because we can do it better than the younger ones. We are not training our successors in the only way they can be trained, - by setting them to work.⁴²⁵

When discussing the previous efforts of the church to reach young people, Clark sees a gap:

It is noticeable that in these former organizations and methods of training the young people, one element was largely left out - the element of training, of personal exercise. If you will examine carefully all these plans, admirable as many of them were, you will notice that, almost without exception, the teaching element predominated. It entirely overshadowed, if it did not absolutely displace, the idea of training. In fact, it is surprising how largely this idea of training the young had been disregarded in the past.⁴²⁶

⁴²⁴ *Seventh Annual Conference of the Young People’s Society of Christian Endeavor: Held in Battery D Armory, Chicago, Ill., Thursday, Friday, Saturday, and Sunday, July 5,6,7 and 8, 1888, with Papers Read at the Conference*, 52–54.

⁴²⁵ *Eighteenth International Conference of the Young People’s Society of Christian Endeavor: Held in Tents Endeavor and Williston, The Light Guard Armory, and Many Churches, Detroit, Mich., July 5-10, 1899* (Boston: United Society of Christian Endeavor, 1899), 22.

⁴²⁶ Clark, *Training the Church of the Future; Auburn Seminary Lectures on Christian Nurture with Special Reference to the Young People’s Society of Christian Endeavor as a Training-school of the Church*, 86.

With the emphasis just on education, the church was excluding young people from opportunities to lead and to serve. There was no place or way for them to be trained to be servants of Christ and the church.

At the twenty-third convention in Seattle, Clark expresses it well,

The key word of Christian Endeavor is Training, training in expression, training in service, training in living, training of the heart, training of the mind, training of the tongue; training of the boy and girl, training of the young man and woman; training to make men and women, training to make citizens, training to make effective Christians; training in the church, training for the church, training by the church. This great convention from beginning to end is an exposition, practical exhibit, so to speak, of the idea for which we stand. This convention would have been impossible, were it not for the trained myriads of Christian Endeavorers who for a quarter of a century have been exemplifying the broad idea of training for the service of the kingdom of God. This, I think we may say, was the great thought which the Christian Endeavor movement introduced into the church life of the day, or at least the great undeveloped thought which it emphasized twenty-five years ago, and which it has continued to emphasize ever since. It is the training-school of the church as the Sunday-school is the teaching-school of the church.⁴²⁷

Again, a year later...

The mission of the Christian Endeavor Society is as plain as the sun in the noonday heavens. It was written in its first constitution; it was perceived by its earliest members; it has been acknowledged by the churches throughout the world; it has been affirmed and established by the providential history of more than twenty-eight years.

The mission is to be the *training-school of the church*.⁴²⁸

The training of young people was to continue the theme of Clark's focus: Christ and the church. As early as the sixth convention, Clark helped Christian Endeavor set

⁴²⁷ *Twenty-Third International Christian Endeavor Convention: Held in Tent Williston and Other Auditoriums and Churches, Seattle, Wash., July 10-15, 1907*, 19.

⁴²⁸ *Twenty-Fourth International Christian Endeavor Convention: Held in The Auditorium, The Armory, and Many Churches, St. Paul, Minn., July 7 to 12, 1909* (Boston: United Society of Christian Endeavor, 1909), 22-23.

forth this motto: “For Christ and the Church”. “Two years ago it was my pleasant duty to propose a motto for our societies. Its virtue lay not in the motto simply, but in the way you adopted it and put life into it: “For Christ and the Church.” Everywhere I have seen this motto. We do not want any better motto I am confident. It will always be stamped upon the great seal of the society.”⁴²⁹ It would become the watchword for Endeavorers around the world.

It would continue to show up in various speeches and writings of Clark. At the World’s Convention in London in 1900 he reiterates:

The farther I travel, the more I see of societies in every land, the more I am convinced that these four principles are the essential, and the only essential principles of the Christian Endeavor Society. Let me repeat them: - 1. Confession of Christ. 2. Service for Christ. 3. Fellowship with Christ’s people. 4. Loyalty to Christ’s Church. With these roots the Christian Endeavor tree will bear fruit in any soil. Cut away any of these roots in any clime and the tree dies.⁴³⁰

Clark sought to find a clearly defined role for Christian Endeavor. As it grew in numbers and breadth, it was important to keep this role at the forefront of the organization’s identity. The role of Christian Endeavor was to train young people into service for Christ and the church.

Communicating Vision and Sharing Best Practices

Clark unified Christian Endeavor from the beginning. He did so with a clear purpose: to communicate with other societies the values and the role of Christian Endeavor, as well as sharing best practices. “Let us always bear in mind that neither the local societies nor the United Society exist for any end, in and of themselves. They are

⁴²⁹ *Eighth Annual Conference of the Young People’s Society of Christian Endeavor*, 59.

⁴³⁰ Chaplin, *Francis E. Clark : Founder of the Y.P.S.C.E.*, 99.

simply servants of the King, couriers of the dawning millennium, and if they refuse to carry their message swiftly and do their Maker's work faithfully, they will have altogether missed their mission."⁴³¹ The organization of a more broadly connected Christian Endeavor was always with the goal for equipping local churches with tools and direction in reaching young people for the advance of Christ and the church. Speaking of the United Society, "What is was at the beginning it is now, simply a bureau of information, and it will always be that and nothing more."⁴³² He continued, "We will exist to give information, and when our work is done we will go out of existence."⁴³³ Clark kept this at the forefront of his leadership through relationships, travel, writing and speaking.

Christian Endeavor provided each local church with an enormous amount of flexibility in its actions, programs and events. However there were a few things that Clark saw as essential to keeping the name Christian Endeavor and to finding success in such a society: the Christian Endeavor pledge; the prayer-meeting (also termed the consecration meeting); and the committees. "The essential features, then of the Young People's Society of Christian Endeavor are pledged and constant attendance upon the weekly prayer-meetings, pledged and *constant participation therein by every active member*, pledged and constant work for others, through the committees and in any way which may be suggested."⁴³⁴

⁴³¹ *Sixth Annual Conference of the Young People's Society of Christian Endeavor: Held at Saratoga Springs, N.Y., July 5, 6, and 7, 1887, with Papers at the Conference*, 71.

⁴³² *Eighth Annual Conference of the Young People's Society of Christian Endeavor*, 53.

⁴³³ *Ibid.*, 57.

⁴³⁴ *Fourth Annual Conference of the Young People's Society of Christian Endeavor: Held at Ocean Park, Old Orchard, Maine, July 8 and 9, 1885, with Papers at the Conference*, 48.

The Christian Endeavor pledge changed slightly over the years, but its core remained the same:

Trusting in the Lord Jesus Christ for strength, I promise him that I will strive to whatever he would have me do: that I will make it a rule of my life to pray and read the Bible every day, and to support my own church in every way, especially by attending all her regular Sunday and mid-week services, unless prevented by some reason which I can conscientiously give to my Savior: and that just as so far I know how, throughout my whole life I will endeavor to lead a Christian life.

As an active member I promise to be true to all my active duties, to be present and take some part, aside from singing, in every Christian Endeavor Prayer Meeting, unless hindered by some reason I can conscientiously give to my Lord and Master. If obliged to be absent from the monthly Consecration Meeting of the Society I will if possible send at least a verse of Scripture to be read in response to my name at the roll call.

The prayer meeting was an integral part of placing leadership on young people from the beginning. The committee work also gave a place for all young people to significantly contribute to the church and the society.

Clark saw these three things as necessary for the flourishing of the society in any place. From the fourteenth convention in Boston in front of the largest ever crowd of Christian Endeavorers he stated:

To speak with all seriousness, so far as my experience has gone, in every part of the world, in every climate, under all circumstances, in all denominations, among young people of every color and condition. I have never known a Christian Endeavor Society to long flourish which ignored the pledge, the consecration meeting, or the essential committees. All of the untimely deaths of which I have heard, - except those due to ecclesiastical strangling or freezing, - can be traced directly to a neglect of these fundamental ideas, which make a young people's society a Christian Endeavor Society.

While there is the utmost flexibility and adaptability to circumstances, doctrines, church polity, and ecclesiastical conditions in all lands, there are also in all lands these common and essential elements which the Endeavor Society has introduced into the organized Christian life of young people, and which is found in the fact that these three features (the pledge, the consecration meeting, the leading committees) embody the distinctive *religious idea* of the Society. No form of words is contended for; no exact uniformity of method is my plea; but for the

predominance of the *supreme religious thought* embodied in the pledge, the consecration meeting, and the essential committees, I do plead.⁴³⁵

Clark restated this a year later: “Each society of Christian Endeavor is in a sense independent. It works out its own problems. It is responsible for its own success or failure. It lives or dies according to its own inherent worth. It manages its own matters. It elects its own officers. It plans its own campaigns. But it is always subordinate to its own church, and seeks to find out and obey the wishes of its own church and pastor.”⁴³⁶

As Christian Endeavor began to grow and prove itself effective around the United States, Clark started to get a vision for the larger impact Christian Endeavor could have around the world and across denominations. At the sixth convention, before he was president he shared in a speech:

If it results in young souls being brought to Christ and strengthened to do Christian work, as our experience has already abundantly proved, in city and country, in village and prairie, in older East and the new West, then it is clear that our opportunity has not been fully improved until all the ninety thousand churches have a chance, if they will but embrace it, to adopt these proved and tried plans for Christian nurture. In all the leading denominations, and most of the minor sects, our societies already exist. They have proved themselves, by actual experience, adapted to the needs of Presbyterians, Baptists, Congregationalist, Methodists, Reformed Churches, Lutherans, Moravians, Quakers, Episcopalians, Christians, and all the various subdivisions of these denominations. Why should we not live to see the day when every church shall have its Society of Christian Endeavor, just as every church has its Sunday-School.⁴³⁷

The vision was captured and Clark restated this at the 7th convention after his first

⁴³⁵ *Fourteenth International Conference of the Young People's Society of Christian Endeavor: Held in Mechanics' Building and in Two Tents Pitched on Boston Common, Boston, Mass., July 10-15, 1895*, 140.

⁴³⁶ *Fifteenth International Conference of the Young People's Society of Christian Endeavor: Held in Central Hall, Tent Williston, Tent Washington, Tent Endeavor, and the Churches, Washington, D.C., July 8-13, 1896*, 81-82.

⁴³⁷ *Sixth Annual Conference of the Young People's Society of Christian Endeavor: Held at Saratoga Springs, N.Y., July 5, 6, and 7, 1887, with Papers at the Conference*, 72.

year as president:

I dare to use only the light of the past blessings in interpreting the future. But, reading by that light, I see nearly ten new Societies of Christian Endeavor established every day during the coming year. I see tens of thousands of young people coming into the kingdom of Christ; I see millions of prayers ascending from young hearts, like incense to the throne; I hear millions of testimonies to the love of Christ; I see pastors' faces glowing with gratitude to God, and many a feeble church taking on new courage and strength by means of the young blood in its veins; I see the old wasted places rebuilt, and the desert blossoming as the rose. Is this an empty prophecy, or will you help to make it true, first in your own lives, and then in your own society?⁴³⁸

Clark would use this vision as a continued challenge to Christian Endeavor.

Clark also communicated best practices in terms of organizing and promoting conventions. He had learned from his writing and work with the press the power that those stories could provide:

Dr. Clark in 1891 gave fourteen rules for the conduct of conventions, of which five deal with advertising. "... (2) Advertise well. (3) Let it be understood that it will be a great meeting... (5) Have as many denominational representatives on the program as possible... (12) Have a press committee to get notices inserted everywhere. (13) See that delegates report the meeting at home." This represents the method by which the Christian Endeavor society grew. These men believed that they had something worth while, and were determined that all should know of it.⁴³⁹

Continued Innovation

Clark's greatest attribute for the organization may have been his ability to organize the movement as it grew. He continued to adapt and innovate new initiatives as the organization transformed. He responded to requests and needs in the field as well as

⁴³⁸ *Seventh Annual Conference of the Young People's Society of Christian Endeavor: Held in Battery D Armory, Chicago, Ill., Thursday, Friday, Saturday, and Sunday, July 5, 6, 7 and 8, 1888, with Papers Read at the Conference*, 55–56.

⁴³⁹ Erb, *The Development of the Young People's Movement.*, 60–61.

brought innovation and challenges to fuel the movement's growth. Where many organizational founders fail to stay with the growing needs of an expanding movement, Clark seemed to excel.

The compact nature of each local Christian Endeavor society allowed for easy oversight by the pastor and other adult leaders, while still allowing for incredible freedom for young people. In most cases it unified in one place any existing young people ministries such as missionary societies, clubs and prayer meetings. "One pastor had six independent societies in his church; they became two, a senior and junior society, and each took care of all the activities of its group. Every phase of church work for young people was unified in the Christian Endeavor society."⁴⁴⁰ By unifying those ministries and yet keeping a simple organizational structure, Christian Endeavor societies proved to be very adaptable to different contexts and conditions. As Chart 3 shows, the structure of a local Christian Endeavor society is very simple. With the pastor as part of the executive committee, he or she would have easy access to what is going on in the local society and an ability to utilize the society as was relevant to that local church. Clark spent a lot of time emphasizing this structure and the role of leadership within it.

Clark realized the challenges of leadership early on:

Let me tell you the great problem which has confronted us during the past year, and, which, during the coming years, will assume larger and larger dimensions. It is this: *How to so guide this mighty agency, which God has raised up in our land, that it shall promote to the utmost personal piety among our members, and the prosperity of the Church for which it lives.* The very size of the society and marvelous rapidity of its growth pressed this problem upon us. Before we knew it, a score of delicate questions, all arising from our rapid growth, were demanding

⁴⁴⁰ Ibid., 62.

settlement.⁴⁴¹

Clark began adapting and responding to needs expressed by local societies.

Again, the adaptability of this society proclaims it to be not a manufactured article, but God's method of reaching young hearts. A mere society might be fitted to one climate and totally unfitted to another; it might flourish in one denomination and utterly wither in another. A mere society is necessarily local and inflexible. A former honored president of the New York Union framed an epigram which will live, when he said, "The Christian Endeavor Society is as strong as steel and as flexible as ribbon."⁴⁴²

He notes just at the turn of the century at the 18th convention in Detroit the many adjustments made in the life of Endeavor:

Going and growing have ever been characteristic of Christian Endeavor. It was born creeping; it soon began to run. If ever the promise has been fulfilled: 'They shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint,' it has been to this organization. Every year of the eighteen of our history has been marked by some advance: -

1881 by the formation of the first society

1882 by the first convention

1883 by the growth beyond the Mississippi

1884 by the formation of the first Junior Society

1885 by the formation of the United Society

1886 by the first Local Union and first State Union

1887 by the formation and rapid growth of the State and Local Unions

1888 by the beginning of work in Great Britain

1889-91 by the marvelous numerical growth in every evangelical denomination coming into the fellowship

1892 by the extension of the movement the world around

1893 by the adoption of Christian citizenship as a legitimate part of Christian Endeavor work

1894 by a great revival of missionary zeal

1895 by the formation of the World's Christian Endeavor Union and a new sense of our international brotherhood

⁴⁴¹ *Seventh Annual Conference of the Young People's Society of Christian Endeavor: Held in Battery D Armory, Chicago, Ill., Thursday, Friday, Saturday, and Sunday, July 5,6,7 and 8, 1888, with Papers Read at the Conference*, 50.

⁴⁴² *Eleventh Annual Conference of the Young People's Society of Christian Endeavor: Held in Madison Square Garden, New York City, July 7 to 10, 1892, with Report of Simultaneous and Overflow Meetings*, 88.

1896 by the adoption of the Tenth Legion
1897 by the beginnings of the Quiet Hour movement
1898, the last and best of all, by the very rapid and substantial expansion of the Tenth Legion, the Quiet Hour, of Bible reading, and the sentiment for peace and international arbitration, as expressed in the Peace Memorial.⁴⁴³

One of the first adaptations of Christian Endeavor was to add a Junior Society.

This was a provision to make specific space for the very young to participate in an Endeavor society with leadership. The adaptations itself would become a model for the type of organization Clark set out to create and grow.

At the 8th convention Clark confesses that the addition of the Junior society was not his own idea:

Consider also the later developments of the work. Who started the first Junior Society? Do you know? I must confess that I am in the dark on this subject, and I doubt very much if the person himself or herself who was used by God in this way knows it even... but when or by whom the first full-fledged Junior Endeavor Society was formed, I doubt if any one will ever know. So it is with the development of the local union and the district convention and the state convention.⁴⁴⁴

By demonstrating this willingness to accept innovation from local societies, Clark communicated his interest in local societies being flexible and offering best practices for others. He also began to realize that there were questions about the appropriate ages for Christian Endeavor.

When starting out, Clark desired to keep the decisions of age limitations to the local churches. Commenting on age limitations at the 4th convention,

Should there be an age limit? These are questions which are often asked. We are

⁴⁴³ *Eighteenth International Conference of the Young People's Society of Christian Endeavor: Held in Tents Endeavor and Williston, The Light Guard Armory, and Many Churches, Detroit, Mich., July 5-10, 1899*, 20.

⁴⁴⁴ *Eighth Annual Conference of the Young People's Society of Christian Endeavor*, 53–54.

not in favor of a strict age limit, since youth and age are such variable terms. Many a man is old at twenty-five. Many a man at fifty is still young. This matter can usually be left to the sanctified common sense of Christian men and women. It is very essential that there should be in the society a number of the older young people, say, those between twenty and twenty-five, to give stability to the work and take the lead in the committees. On the other side the age limit easily takes care of itself. Children whom their parents allow to be out in the evening are not too young to become members.⁴⁴⁵

The Junior society specifically was to be a bridge from Sunday School to Christian Endeavor. It was also a way to expand Christian Endeavor societies within a local church.

Clark used this same opportunity of adding societies in one local setting when he added the intermediate societies:

I am inclined to think that any society that has an active membership of one hundred, or perhaps even seventy-five, is already too large for the most efficient work, and that an Intermediate section should be formed to take in the young people between fourteen and eighteen or nineteen. They will develop faster if they have the responsibility of a society thrust upon them, a responsibility that they cannot share in the older society if it is a large one. The congested prayer meeting hour of the Young People's Society would be relieved, the back-seat Endeavorers - may their number ever decrease! - will have less excuse for not taking their part, and in every way the true Christian Endeavor idea will be strengthened.⁴⁴⁶

As time went on and the age level innovations continued, Clark became more prescriptive. At the 28th convention Clark sought to standardize the ages for the different levels: "Let these four names always mean something definite: *Juniors*, as a rule - the children from seven to fourteen; *Intermediate* - the high school age, from fourteen to seventeen inclusive; *Seniors*, eighteen and over - eighteen- plus what you please; *Alumni*,

⁴⁴⁵ *Fourth Annual Conference of the Young People's Society of Christian Endeavor: Held at Ocean Park, Old Orchard, Maine, July 8 and 9, 1885, with Papers at the Conference*, 47-48.

⁴⁴⁶ Chaplin, Francis E. *Clark : Founder of the Y.P.S.C.E.*, 71-72.

all graduate and older friends who are interested in our work.”⁴⁴⁷

Eventually Clark would also add an alumni association. “The main purpose of the association is to organize former Endeavorers (1) for fellowship; (2) to keep them in touch with developments in Christian Endeavor; and (3) to enlist their help in the world-wide aims of the Movement.”⁴⁴⁸ In the United States the Alumni Fellowship requirements were stretched to not only include those who were former members, but also those who were too old of age to enter Christian Endeavor but were interested in the work with young people and willing to support the movement.

The innovations continued as Christian Endeavor grew. The first new development by Clark in the Christian Endeavor societies was the idea of organizing unions for fellowship. The conventions were too rare a thing for many groups and so the local unions were formed in order to organize three or four meetings of fellowship a year.⁴⁴⁹ These existed to help local churches in their efforts to share ideas and fellowship. The local union would grow as the organization grew and would include state unions. The unions only existed as a support for the local societies (see Chart 4).

Christian Endeavor, as far back as the 1893 convention in Montreal, has sought to promote its members to good citizenship. Clark began the Christian Endeavor Civic Clubs, which were mostly embraced in the United States, as avenues for informing members of the issues of a community to help avoid corruption and promote better decisions. Clark asked, “How many know how they are governed; are acquainted with

⁴⁴⁷ *Twenty-Eighth International Christian Endeavor Convention: Held in the 71st Regiment Armory and Many Churches, New York City, N.Y., July 6 to 11, 1921*, 26.

⁴⁴⁸ Chaplin, *Francis E. Clark : Founder of the Y.P.S.C.E.*, 80.

⁴⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 69–70.

their city charter; know about their city's school system, its poor-laws, its streets and sewers, the municipal platforms of the parties and their political machinery?"⁴⁵⁰

Another innovation that came from the local societies was that of the Tenth Legion. Begun in 1895 by a New York Endeavorer, Mr. W.L. Amerman, it was adopted by the New York City Union in 1896 and then recommended by Clark to all Endeavorers at the San Francisco Convention a year later. The idea was simple, "members express their intention to show their loyalty to Christ as their Lord and Master by recognizing that their silver and gold are His, and dedicating at least one-tenth of their income to His service."⁴⁵¹

Always a man of much prayer, in 1897 he invited the Endeavorers to pledge with him to spend time every day in private prayer. The covenant read: "Trusting in the Lord Jesus Christ for strength, I will make it the rule of my life to set apart at least fifteen minutes every day, if possible in the early morning, for quiet meditation and direct communion with God."⁴⁵² From his speech at the convention:

Set apart, religiously and sacredly, at least fifteen minutes every morning to communion with God. More imperative than any business engagement, more sacred than any matter of family concern, more important than eating or sleeping, make this daily engagement with God. There look into the face of God. 'Practice the presence of God' for at least fifteen minutes every morning, before the day's cares distract your mind, and you like Moses, will be able to endure "as seeing him who is invisible."⁴⁵³

⁴⁵⁰ Ibid., 78.

⁴⁵¹ Ibid., 77.

⁴⁵² Ibid., 73.

⁴⁵³ *Sixteenth International Conference of the Young People's Society of Christian Endeavor: Held in the Mechanics', Woodward's Pavilions, and in Many Churches, San Francisco, Cal., July 7-12, 1897*, 53.

In 1898 Clark set forward the idea of Family Endeavor: “Family religion is a foundation stone of all our religious life in Church and State, and family worship lies near the foundation stone of all family religion. In building up the family altar, religion builds itself up. It is as natural that Christian Endeavor should stand for Christian family life as for Christian citizenship or Christian missions.”⁴⁵⁴ Clark knew that the parents of children had the largest impact on them. He wanted to encourage the home to be the first place where Endeavor principles were realized. He created a pledge for this as well: “Trusting in the Lord Jesus Christ for strength, we will endeavor to maintain family worship in our home, and will strive to make it, through kindness, courtesy, and mutual helpfulness, a household of God.”⁴⁵⁵

As the organization grew in numbers, scope and in age, Clark realized the need to have someone at the local level with a “corporate memory”. This would be someone who would know the story of Christian Endeavor, know its principles and be a resource in guiding the movements of the local society. “In every society should be some, at least, who have thoroughly studied our principles; and I propose not only that in every society a Christian Endeavor study-class be instituted, but that pastor and president confer the degree of C.E.E. ‘Christian Endeavor Expert,’ on every proficient student.”⁴⁵⁶

By continuing to innovate, Clark modeled the very flexibility and responsiveness he wished for each local society. He understood that a movement standing still is going backwards and so his call and his charge was always onward.

⁴⁵⁴ Chaplin, *Francis E. Clark : Founder of the Y.P.S.C.E.*, 74.

⁴⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 75.

⁴⁵⁶ *Twenty-Fifth International Christian Endeavor Convention: Held on The Million-Dollar Pier and in Many Churches, Atlantic City, N.J., July 6-12, 1911*, 20.

Clark would speak at each convention and challenge Christian Endeavor always forward. Part of his leadership was to speak clearly here to the thousands listening in attendance and the millions around the world reading it again later. Those addresses would be captured in convention reports and the *Christian Endeavor World*.

Chart 3: Organization of Local Society

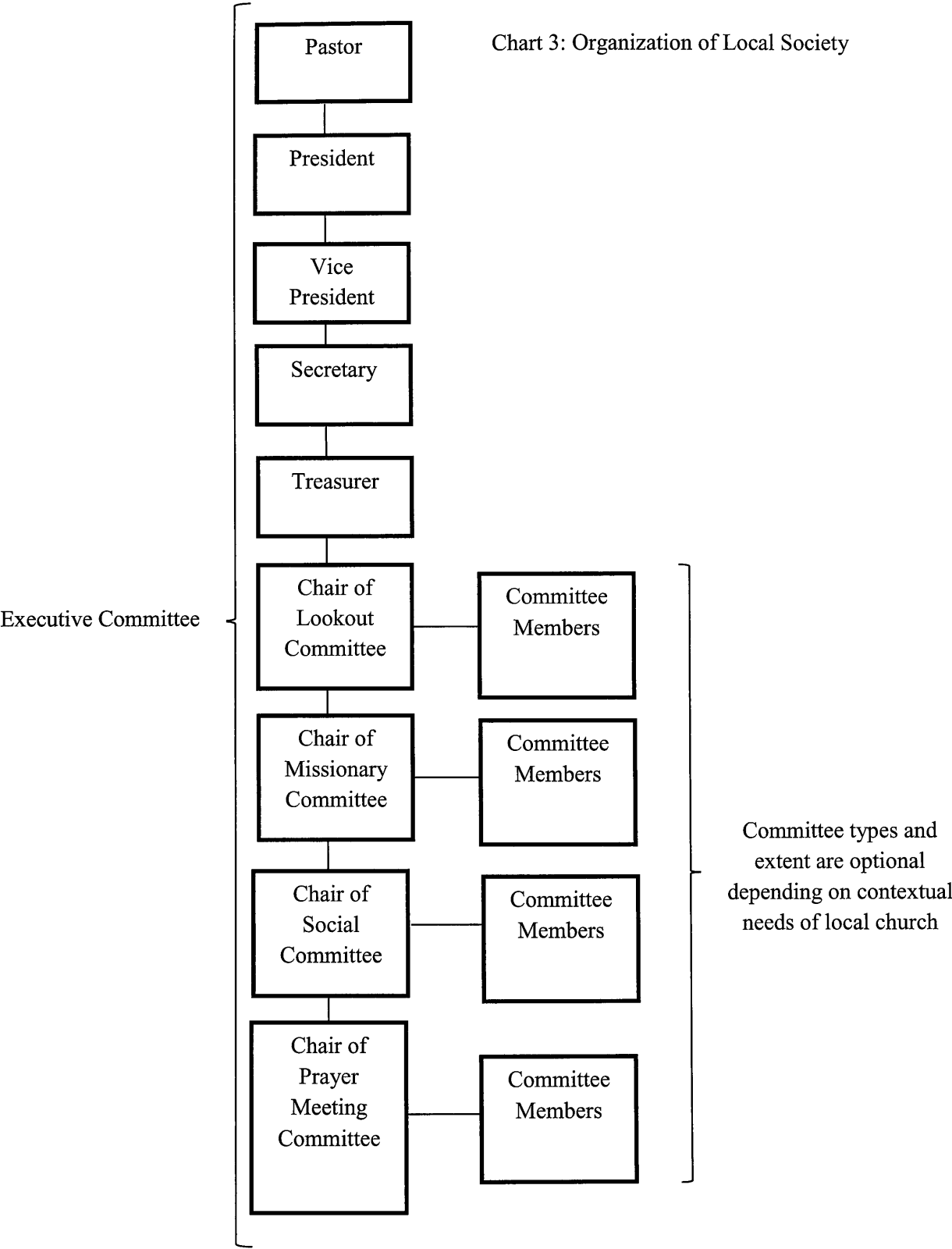
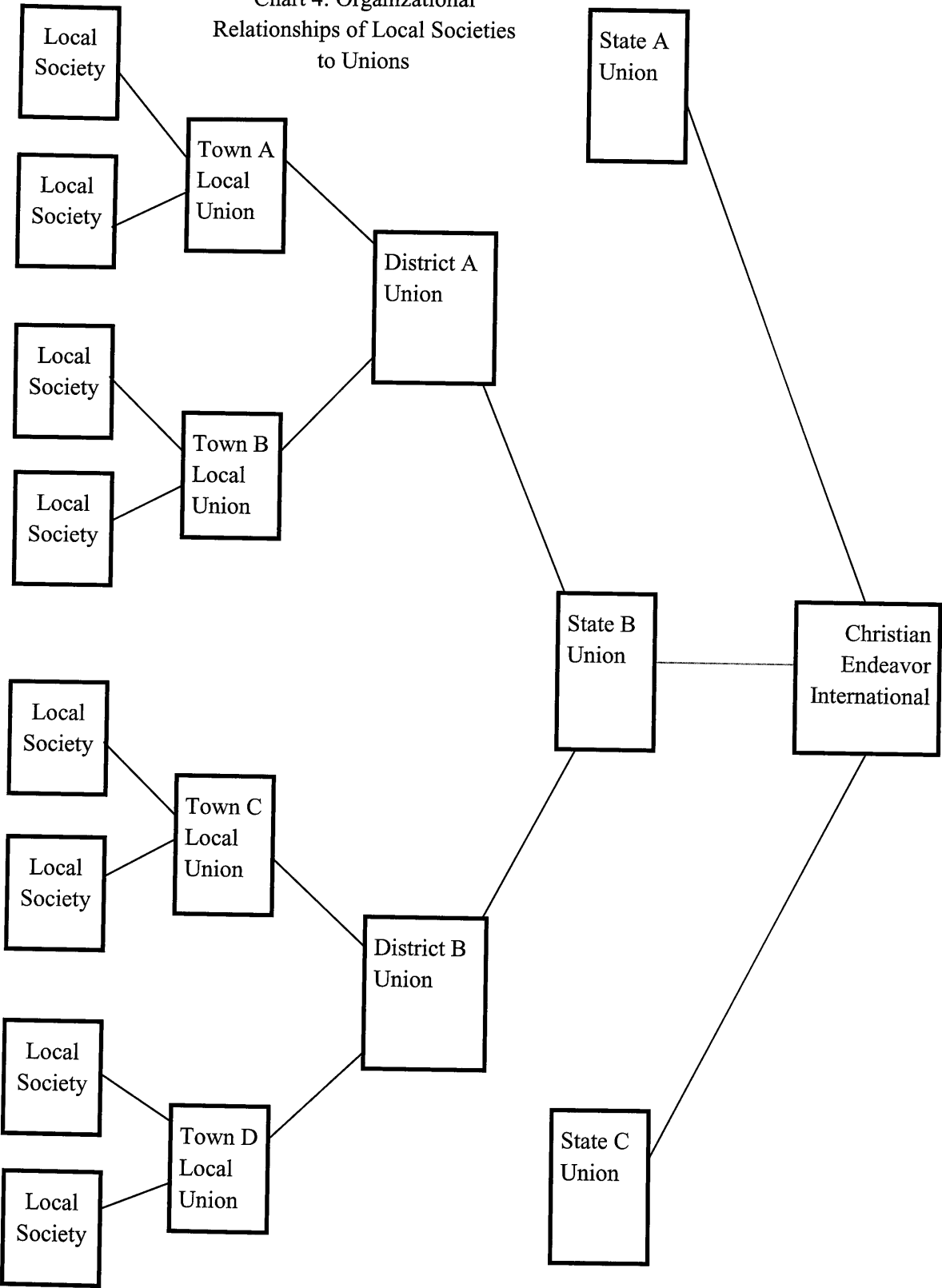


Chart 4: Organizational Relationships of Local Societies to Unions



As Christian Endeavor grew, so did Clark's challenges. He did not want anyone to lose sight of the goal to grow the church for Christ. A few snapshots of these challenges from 1909, 1915 and 1923 help realize the point:

There is great advantage in having a definite ideal, a target far off perhaps, but yet within sight, at which we can aim; and I further propose that in realizing our purpose and our motto, "Christian Endeavor 1911," we strive for a million new members before 1911; yes, let me repeat, *a million new members before 1911*.

This is what that may mean! Its full significance is glorious indeed. Its results stretch into and through eternity.

A million souls born into the Kingdom!
A million pairs of busy hands set at work for the Master!
A million hearts welded to the church in more loving loyalty!
A million mouths opened in confession!
A million lives brought into closer fellowship with other millions!
These in brief, are some of the meanings of 'Christian Endeavor 1911.'⁴⁵⁷

*"'Christian Endeavor 1911' Means Ten Thousand New Societies and a Million New Members in Two Years."*⁴⁵⁸

Here is what I ask you to achieve, in the name of the Master, and trusting in Him for strength, during the next two years:

A Million New Members for our Societies.
A Million New Converts uniting with the Church.
A Million New Dollars for Missions.
A Million Advocates of the Peace Union.
Ten Thousand New Societies of Christian Endeavor.
Twenty Thousand New Comrades of the Quiet Hour.
Ten Thousand New Legionaries.
Ten Thousand New Christian Endeavor Experts.
Five Thousand New Life-Work Recruits.

⁴⁵⁷ *Twenty-Fourth International Christian Endeavor Convention: Held in The Auditorium, The Armory, and Many Churches, St. Paul, Minn., July 7 to 12, 1909, 23–24.*

⁴⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 25.

*Twenty Thousand New Yearly Subscribers to the Christian Endeavor World.*⁴⁵⁹

“So I would suggest for our evangelistic goal that we strive within the next two years to bring to a knowledge of Jesus Christ and into His church a number equal to fifty per cent of the present active membership of our societies. This indeed will mean “Our friends for Christ.”⁴⁶⁰ Clark was set on growing Christian Endeavor, but not for some selfish gain, but to humbly serve the church.

Unifying the Church

Another important idea for Clark was the Christian Endeavor would be a unifying force in the church. It would never become specifically denominational or choose a specific theology or political viewpoint to support. Clark, from the beginning of the growth of the Christian Endeavor, believed that the core values of the movement had a place everywhere in every church. “Gradually, as the Movement grew, Dr. Clark had a vision of a mighty host of young people of all denominations united in service to the Church and the Kingdom of God... Here was Church union of a practical sort; not a union of doctrine or ceremony, but one of service.”⁴⁶¹ He believed that the call of Christian Endeavor would not lead any church or denomination to deny any of its own principles, but rather would work to grow the local church, denominations and the global church.

⁴⁵⁹ *Twenty-Seventh International (Fifth World's) Christian Endeavor Convention: Held in The Coliseum and in Many Churches, Chicago, Illinois, July 7-12, 1915* (Boston: United Society of Christian Endeavor, 1915), 42–43.

⁴⁶⁰ *Twenty-Ninth International Christian Endeavor Convention: Held in the Coliseum, the Fair-Grounds and in Many Churches, Des Moines, Iowa, July 4 to 9, 1923* (Boston: United Society of Christian Endeavor, 1923), 22.

⁴⁶¹ Chaplin, *Francis E. Clark : Founder of the Y.P.S.C.E.*, 134.

Clark did not desire for Christian Endeavor to ever become a distraction or obstacle for the local church. He firmly believed that engaging in Christian Endeavor would strengthen every church with its commitment to train and nurture young people.

Clark emphasized this at the 2nd convention:

One point more. Let it always be understood that the Society is simply and only a humble helpmeet of the church, and for the church. In no instance has it been known to distract from the church the interest of the young people, or to monopolize their efforts to the detriment of the church. In many instances has it been known to quicken the interest of the young in the church and of the church in the young. Until the church has been ready to receive the children, the Society has often kept them from lapsing into a state of carelessness and indifference, from which state a second awakening is most difficult.⁴⁶²

Again at the 10th convention:

It has been said before, but I say it again, that the words may be emphasized by your endorsement; The Society of Christian Endeavor, by its very principles, when they are understood and adopted, *necessarily* increases church loyalty and denominational fidelity. It makes the young Methodist a better Methodist, the young Presbyterian a better Presbyterian, the young Baptist a better Baptist, the young Congregationalist, a better Congregationalist, the young Lutheran a better Lutheran, the young Disciple of Christ a better Disciple of Christ.⁴⁶³

Clark wanted to serve and unify the church.

This commitment to unity and to inclusiveness can be seen throughout his life in his speeches and writings. From his speech in 1888 when he was first elected president:

We can only serve all reform movements by not coming under the denomination of any one idea. We can only serve the cause of Christ in all denominations by not being narrowed to one denomination. While each society owes allegiance only to the local church and denomination with which it is connected, the idea, the movement, the society as a whole, owes allegiance only to evangelical, biblical Christianity. I urge upon you, brethren, in all your different denominations, hearty devotion to your own creed, to your own religious order, to your own local

⁴⁶² *Second Annual Conference of the Young People's Society of Christian Endeavor: Held at the Payson Memorial Church, Portland, ME, June 7th, 1883, 5.*

⁴⁶³ *Tenth Annual Conference of the Young People's Society of Christian Endeavor: Held at Minneapolis, Minn., July 9 to 12, 1891, 26.*

church.⁴⁶⁴

Speaking about the appeal of Christian Endeavor to all denominations at the World Convention in London 1900, Clark remembered the reports from the early days:

The Presbyterian said he liked it, because it believed in the covenant pledge, and so of course it was in accord with the principles of his denomination. The Congregationalists would say it provided for initiative and for freedom in method, so of course they liked it. And the Baptist would follow and say, "We like Christian Endeavor, because it puts so much emphasis on the Word of God, and makes that the only rule of faith and practice, so of course it is in accord with the teaching of our denomination." And the Epsicopalian would say, "We like it, because so much emphasis is put upon child-training, and Christian nurture in the early days, which is exactly what the Church has stored for during all the centuries." Then of course, the Friend was always equal to the occasion. I was afraid that the participation in every weekly meeting might be distasteful to him; but he would say, "It is exactly in accord with our belief, for when anyone prepares for a meeting, the Spirit always moves him to take part."⁴⁶⁵

To this end, Clark did not want to be disassociated with denominations. Rather, his vision was to be joined with all denominations. He saw Christian Endeavor as a thread that could work to unify the church for Christ and for young people around the world. "Christian Endeavor has always stood for friendship, fellowship, brotherhood, union. One of its favorite words from the beginning has been 'Interdenominational'... A movement may be *undenominational* without being linked up definitely with denominations, but to be *interdenominational* a movement must be definitely related to the denominations. Christian Endeavor is exactly in this position."⁴⁶⁶ In an era of increasing diversity, Clark saw the society as a bond of peace.

⁴⁶⁴ *Seventh Annual Conference of the Young People's Society of Christian Endeavor: Held in Battery D Armory, Chicago, Ill., Thursday, Friday, Saturday, and Sunday, July 5, 6, 7 and 8, 1888, with Papers Read at the Conference*, 53.

⁴⁶⁵ Chaplin, *Francis E. Clark: Founder of the Y.P.S.C.E.*, 98–99.

Clark believed that the unity found in Christian Endeavor could be a model to the world for Christian unity. “We have the opportunity of showing, not only of saying, but of demonstrating, in a way never before possible for young Christians in the history of the world, that *we believe* in the communion of the saints... Now, for a million young hearts in thirty evangelical denominations, in every realm on the globe, the day has come when Christian fellowship is an inspiring reality.”⁴⁶⁷ For many the conventions and the commonality in finding Christian Endeavor around the world did just that.

However, Clark’s vision for unifying the work of young people was not fully realized.

But Dr. Clark’s dream was partly shattered very early in the history of Christian Endeavor. Some of the denominations in the United States began to withdraw their young people from the fellowship of the Movement and to form denominational organizations. Dr. Clark tried to stave off this disruptive effort by urging the adoption of Bishop John H. Vincent, eminent Methodist leader, and founder of the Chautauqua movement, that Christian Endeavor should be the common denominator of young people’s organizations and that denominational societies might remain in the Movement by adding to their denominational names the words “of Christian Endeavor.” But the proposal fell on deaf ears.⁴⁶⁸

While Christian Endeavor was broadly accepted by many evangelical denominations, it was never fully received and could not bridge the divide with the Roman Catholic Church. “Christian Endeavor was never adopted by the Roman Catholic Church and only to a limited extent by the Protestant Episcopal denomination. In all countries, however, where non-conformity was strong, the society flourished, and was even encouraged occasionally in the State church of some European countries.

⁴⁶⁶ Ibid., 131.

⁴⁶⁷ *Tenth Annual Conference of the Young People’s Society of Christian Endeavor: Held at Minneapolis, Minn., July 9 to 12, 1891*, 26.

⁴⁶⁸ Chaplin, *Francis E. Clark : Founder of the Y.P.S.C.E.*, 135.

Furthermore it gained a strong hold in the Protestant missions of the Orient.”⁴⁶⁹ Globally there were exceptions to denominational policies in the United States. Some churches, including the Roman Catholic Church in some places, accepted Christian Endeavor where their brothers and sisters in the United States had not. The Roman Catholic Church in South America was quite active in Christian Endeavor. The opposite was true in some places as well. The Epworth League in the United States took many Methodists away from Christian Endeavor, but Methodists globally were often still associated with Christian Endeavor.⁴⁷⁰

The vision for Clark to unify the church was never fully realized in the ways he had envisioned, but clearly Christian Endeavor worked to bring passion to a movement that spread across a large section of the church. Evidences from the conventions, to the growing numbers of members around the world, are vast to show the powerful synthesis brought by the society.

Opposition

This is not to say that Christian Endeavor and Francis Clark were not without opposition. Clark saw several obstacles for Christian Endeavor to continue onward through his thirty-seven years as President. These could be seen in three main categories: those who thought Christian Endeavor was bad for the church; those who thought Christian Endeavor was taking away from denominations; and those who sought to reform societies for their own agenda. Frank Otis Erb summarizes the criticism well:

⁴⁶⁹ Clark and Clark, *A Son's Portrait of Dr. Francis E. Clark.*, 105.

⁴⁷⁰ Clark, *Memories of Many Men in Many Lands; an Autobiography*; Senter, *When God Shows Up: A History of Protestant Youth Ministry in America.*

It was declared to be without scriptural authority, and to be usurping the place of the church, which alone had divine authorization. It was greatly feared that it would divide the church on the basis of age, and supplant the church in the affection of the young. It was declared by many that it interfered seriously with other church meetings, particularly the Sunday evening preaching service, usually evangelistic, and the midweek prayer-meeting. Many feared that it would divert the young people's money from denominational channels, and would lead to haphazard giving and a lack of interest in the causes to which the church and denomination were pledged.⁴⁷¹

Clark clearly saw each of these as threats and stood against them.

Early criticism of Christian Endeavor included thoughts that it was putting young people into positions of leadership that they were not capable of and thus "spoiling" them and making them conceited in their work.

The society early passed through the 'pooh-pooh stage,' and survived it. Men sneered at it as a hothouse for the forcing of premature spiritual vegetables, sometimes changing the figure by calling it a 'wishy-washy flood of youthful gush.' They gave it two years to live, and then five, and then ten, and now twenty. But time has answered those prophets, whom arguments could not reach; and they have for the most part ceased to sneer.⁴⁷²

In addition, some thought that Christian Endeavor would only work to separate young people from the church for its own purposes and organization, because attending the Christian Endeavor prayer meeting often meant missing the church-wide prayer meeting. Some critics called Christian Endeavor a "little church within the church," but were proved wrong over time by the strong track record of Christian Endeavor to support and call for loyalty to the church.⁴⁷³ Indeed these misunderstandings of Christian Endeavor did not realize the hope of Clark to support and grow the church.

⁴⁷¹ Erb, *The Development of the Young People's Movement.*, 59.

⁴⁷² *Twelfth International Conference of the Young People's Society of Christian Endeavor: Held in Montreal, P.Q., July 5-9, 1893*, 72.

⁴⁷³ Ibid.

Another obstacle that Clark had to work around was the perception that Christian Endeavor was working against denominations. Clark identified this publicly in his second convention as President,

In some quarters, I regret to say, through a misunderstanding of what the Christian Endeavor Society really is, a vigorous and what seems to be a systematic effort has been made to crowd out Christian Endeavor Societies and crowd in strictly denominational societies, not because the Christian Endeavor Society was not doing an admittedly good work, but because it did not belong exclusively to a single denomination. By all means let us have the best. If any denomination or individual church has a better society, let us all have that; if the Christian Endeavor Society is good for all, why should not all have it?⁴⁷⁴

For Clark this was working against the call throughout Scripture to unity in the church. He was not against denominations, but rather was for denominations coming together for the common cause of strengthening and empowering young people for service.

Mark me, I am not reflecting on denominations, any more than I would reflect upon the regiments, corps, and divisions of an army, but I do depreciate, and so I am sure do you, the spirit that is unwilling to allow any common bond between young disciples, the spirit that would shun a common name and similar methods of work, and that would perpetuate the differences and promote rivalries. Here, we believe, in this name, 'Christian Endeavor,' which recognizes the supremacy of Christ and the supremacy of effort for Him, a common bond of union is found, while at the same time unswerving, steadfast loyalty to the particular division in which we have enlisted is secured.⁴⁷⁵

In Clark's opinion many of these denominational efforts to denounce Christian Endeavor were not about theology heresy, inappropriate practices, or divisive practices, but rather about a loss in money raised for the denominational causes. Clark was adamant that this was not the case.

⁴⁷⁴ *Eighth Annual Conference of the Young People's Society of Christian Endeavor*, 58.

⁴⁷⁵ *Tenth Annual Conference of the Young People's Society of Christian Endeavor: Held at Minneapolis, Minn., July 9 to 12, 1891*, 28.

There was the needless fear that Christian Endeavor might draw the young people from Church loyalty. But there was another fear, frankly stated, that the young people would be induced to buy Christian Endeavor literature rather than the denominational publications. It was further feared that the young folks would give to Christian Endeavor money that ought to flow into denominational coffers. Events have falsified all these.⁴⁷⁶

In the estimation of Clark and other leaders, Christian Endeavorers proved to give more money and be more faithful to denominations and their efforts than non-Endeavorers.

It should be mentioned here that Clark often publicly said that he was only wanting to empower young people. He would say he did not care if it was Christian Endeavor, as long as it was effective. However, Erb notes that while this might have been the message spoken by Clark, Clark seems to never have endorsed any other youth organization.⁴⁷⁷

The earliest denominational youth organization that stood against Christian Endeavor and sought to do its own thing was the Epworth League. The Epworth League, the Methodist denominational young people's society, grew out of reaction against Christian Endeavor's limited emphasis on evangelism, its interdenominationalism, its insistence on a formal pledge, and its lack of "brotherly helpfulness."⁴⁷⁸ Its goal was to promote personal piety, to aid friends in the church with the same, and to evangelize.⁴⁷⁹ The last point, evangelism, was noted as an early weakness of Christian Endeavor. It was also a reaction to the interdenominational nature of Christian Endeavor which assumed that the unique theological beliefs of Methodism were a smaller matter. The Christian

⁴⁷⁶ Chaplin, *Francis E. Clark : Founder of the Y.P.S.C.E.*, 135.

⁴⁷⁷ Erb, *The Development of the Young People's Movement.*, 70–71.

⁴⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 76.

⁴⁷⁹ "Epworth League Constitution," *Epworth Herald*, February 9, 1895, 589.

Endeavor pledge was often the subject of critique and so the Epworth League removed a pledge altogether. Finally, the Epworth League sought to lessen the intensely religious and spiritual focus that Christian Endeavor supported and to offer more social support for young people.

While started in the mid 1880's along with other smaller Methodist youth societies, the Epworth League was not formally adopted by the Methodist Church until 1892. Once formalized, many Christian Endeavor societies in Methodist churches became Epworth Leagues. Clark did not like this and met with Methodist leaders who verbalized a commitment to not actively campaign against Christian Endeavor societies already at work in their churches. However, after the meeting the opposite seemed to be true and the Methodist leadership actively pursued the wide-spread adoption of the Epworth League.⁴⁸⁰

The Epworth League was successful in making a difference in the lives of young people in the Methodist church by propagating the Methodists doctrine and piety. This can also be seen as its greatest weakness. By reacting so strongly against Christian Endeavor, the Epworth League was very prescriptive in the way it was to be run, the piety to be aspired to and the doctrine to be preached.⁴⁸¹ This made it incredibly complex and difficult to navigate and lead with any innovation or creativity.

Clark realized that Christian Endeavor and its message was unique. He also realized that many other groups and causes were after young people in the church. As early as the sixth convention Clark notes:

⁴⁸⁰ Erb, *The Development of the Young People's Movement.*, 73.

⁴⁸¹ Ibid., 78–79.

Already, organizations, whose primary object is not to build up the young disciple's *spiritual nurture*, but those whose chief aim is rather social or literary, encouraged by the great success of the Christian Endeavor Societies, are seeking for admission to our churches. If these gain their end and preoccupy the ground, it will be much more difficult, perhaps impossible, for our societies to enter it. So the next few years are critical years in our work, years whose importance cannot be overestimated.⁴⁸²

When an organization starts to become influential in the lives of young people and the church, people notice. Countless people approached Clark and other Christian Endeavor leaders about "joining" forces with Christian Endeavor for their purposes. Clark saw these as efforts to reform Christian Endeavor and move it away from its primary roles. Therefore he fought against them publicly.

There are always numerous efforts to capture a vigorous organization and to carry it into the camp of some hobby, or someone reform, or someone denomination or sect, and when such hobby, or reform, or denomination sees it cannot be captured or bought, it is very apt to denounce the movement, or to start a rival which it is thought will divide and destroy it. These efforts have been tried, these ambushes very likely await our society. I appeal now for your support in attempting to keep the Christian Endeavor Society a *Christian Endeavor Society*.⁴⁸³

His efforts were not to raise awareness of the obstacles, but rather to acknowledge that they were there in order to keep Christian Endeavor focused on its primary task. At the 12th convention, Clark dealt very directly with those who sought to reform the movement.

Now, with all due deference to those friends who would usher in this fourth stage of the development of the movement, let me ask a few questions:

Is it nothing, O advocate of a new crusade, is it nothing that the Society has

⁴⁸² *Sixth Annual Conference of the Young People's Society of Christian Endeavor: Held at Saratoga Springs, N.Y., July 5,6, and 7, 1887, with Papers at the Conference, 74.*

⁴⁸³ *Seventh Annual Conference of the Young People's Society of Christian Endeavor: Held in Battery D Armory, Chicago, Ill., Thursday, Friday, Saturday, and Sunday, July 5,6,7 and 8, 1888, with Papers Read at the Conference, 52.*

created or revived and rejuvenated twenty-six thousand young people's prayer meetings?

Is it nothing that it has poured the warm life-blood of its youthful enthusiasm into thousands of week-night church prayer meetings?

Is it nothing that it has comforted and strengthened pastors in all their work, as myriads of them are ready to testify?

Is it nothing that for a multitude of young people it has solved the question of worldly amusements, not by preaching against these amusements or by passing laws against them, but by the higher legislation of substitution, of overcoming evil with good?

Is it nothing that thousands of Sunday schools have been enlarged through the efforts of the Sunday-school committee?

Is it nothing that tens of thousands of young strangers have been made to feel at home by the Calling committee?

Is it nothing that a multitude of churches have been made bright with God's hand-painted pictures, the flowers, and that an equal multitude of hospitals have afterward glowed with their radiance, the beautiful radiance that follows the footsteps of the Flower and Sunshine committees?

Is it nothing that missionary meetings have been multiplied, that hundreds have given *themselves* to proclaim the good tidings, and that at least a hundred thousand dollars were given last year by the Christian Endeavor societies. In addition to what would otherwise have been given, through the agency of Missionary committees, and through the regular denominational boards?

Is it above all, nothing that through the efforts of the Lookout and allied committees, and of faithful helpers in every society, scores of thousands of our associate members came into the evangelical churches, and came in, not to be drones, but to be working Christians?⁴⁸⁴

Clark's focus remained on the training of young people for service for Christ and the church. Always seeing God calling the organization forward, to not rest in its past achievements, Clark commented in this speech at the 18th convention, "But we will not let the visionary fanatics or carping critics keep us from true progress, from real going

⁴⁸⁴ *Twelfth International Conference of the Young People's Society of Christian Endeavor: Held in Montreal, P.Q., July 5-9, 1893*, 73.

and growing. We have not yet attained. We are not yet full grown. There are new steps to be taken, new advances to be made.”⁴⁸⁵

Christian Endeavor had many critics over the years. As Chaplin reports:

The late Charles Waters, founder of the International Bible Reading Association, had a quaint collection of letters and newspaper attacks, which eventually he destroyed, believing that they had become obsolete, and had better be forgotten. But nothing worthwhile has ever been launched in this world that has not found critics and opponents. It would be too much to expect that Christian Endeavor should escape the fate of other causes. Yet it is difficult to comprehend to-day how many of the mis-understandings about Christian Endeavor could have arisen. The society was said to be a parasite that would suck the life blood of the Church. It was declared to be superfluous because it was organized to do the very work for which the Church itself has been organized.⁴⁸⁶

But time, growth and fruitful labor would prove Christian Endeavor and Francis Clark to be faithful supporters of Christ and the growth of the church.

Francis Clark served as the president of United Christian Endeavor for twenty-three years. He served with conviction, purpose and direction. He unified people and removed obstacles for a movement to reach around the world changing the face of the Protestant church and its approach to young people.

Retirement

As Clark aged he realized the limitations that he now had in leading the movement. Created for young people, Clark realized that Christian Endeavor needed a leader who could continue to move the organization forward. At the 28th convention in New York in 1921, Clark was ready to retire. “In an impromptu introduction he told of a

⁴⁸⁵ *Eighteenth International Conference of the Young People's Society of Christian Endeavor: Held in Tents Endeavor and Williston, The Light Guard Armory, and Many Churches, Detroit, Mich., July 5-10, 1899*, 21.

⁴⁸⁶ Chaplin, *Francis E. Clark : Founder of the Y.P.S.C.E.*, 45.

desire of years' standing to retire from the burdens of the presidency of Christian Endeavor. The trustees refused to let him go, and Dr. Clark told the great audience that he could only accept re-election if the Endeavorers would support him by supporting the world-wide work of Christian Endeavor."⁴⁸⁷ Clark continued in his focus to help the global church reach the young people of the world.

Later at that same convention, Clark reported, "It is a glorious privilege to belong to an organization that has an influence in every continent. No religious organization has a battle line farther flung than ours. It extends from beyond the Arctic circle to the Antarctic. The sun never sets upon Christian Endeavor. This means our duty to stand for *world peace* and *world fellowship* and *world evangelization*."⁴⁸⁸ The work of Christian Endeavor was reaching the world. To illustrate the reach of Christian Endeavor and to help the conference attendees see the potential continued impact Clark highlighted the impact.

The following is a muster roll of the countries in which Christian Endeavor is found: Africa, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azores, Barbados, Belgium, Bermuda, Bolivia, Bohemia, Brazil, British Guiana, Bulgaria, Burma, Canada, Canal Zone, Cape Colony, Caroline Islands, Ceylon, Chile, China, Colombia, Congoland, Costa Rica, Cuba, Denmark, Ecuador, Egypt, Ellice Islands, Esthonia, Fiji Islands, Finland, Formosa, France, Germany, Gibraltar, Gilbert Islands, Great Britain, and Ireland, Greece, Grenada, West Indies, Guatemala, Haiti, Hawaii, Holland, Hungary, Iceland, India, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jugo-slavia, Korea, Labrador, Laos, Lapland, Latvia, Lithuania, Loyalty Islands, Madagascar, Madeira Islands, Marshall Islands, Mauritius, Mexico, Natal, Norway, Newfoundland, New Zealand, Orange River, Palestine, Panama, Persia, Peru, Philippine Islands, Poland, Porto Rico, Portugal, Russia, Samoa, Siam, Soudan, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Syria, Tasmania, Tokelua Islands, Transvaal, Trinidad, Turkey, United States, Upper Hebrides, Uruguay, Venezuela.

⁴⁸⁷ *Twenty-Eighth International Christian Endeavor Convention: Held in the 71st Regiment Armory and Many Churches, New York City, N.Y., July 6 to 11, 1921*, 24.

⁴⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 27.

There may be a few others which we have not listed.⁴⁸⁹

The Endeavorers responded whole heartedly that they wanted Clark to remain president and that they were willing to support the continued emphasis on the global reach of Christian Endeavor for Christ and for the church. “Touched to the heart, Dr. Clark stirred the multitude by his answer to their promise: ‘*I accept your election, backed as it is by your promise of support.*’”⁴⁹⁰ However this stay of Presidency would not last much longer. Clark’s failing health and the requirements of travel were the writing on the wall.

After spending the next two years confined to travels within the southern United States, Clark made his way to Portland, Oregon for the 30th convention. Clark had long felt that the duties of both the United Society and the World Union were too much for one person. An editorial in *The Christian Herald* pointed out,

Fourteen years ago he felt that, in view of the rapid growth of the organization, and of the fact that he was also president of the World’s Christian Endeavor Union, the increasing duties of both were more than one man should carry, and a change was desirable. He was overruled by a host of loving friends. Now, however, with impaired health, and having reached his seventy-fourth year, he feels that resignation from one of the offices is an important duty.⁴⁹¹

The convention reports details the proceedings:

The most impressive item on the programme of this meeting was the resignation of Dr. Clark as president of the United Society of Christian Endeavor. A number of times in the past Dr. Clark has been anxious to resign, but it did not seem the wise thing at any time in the past to grant the president’s request. He has served as president for thirty-eight years, giving in service the very best that was in him. He pointed out that a man was not ready to step into his place, and that the

⁴⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁹⁰ Ibid., 24.

⁴⁹¹ *Thirtieth International Christian Endeavor Convention: Held in Portland, Oregon, July 4 to 10, 1925*, 158.

organization would not be a single day without a head. Strangely enough on this very day, July 6, thirty-eight years ago, Dr. Clark entered upon his office. In simple words, on this anniversary, then, he presented his plea for release from the burden of service as president of the society.

The proposal manifestly came as a great surprise to some, but Dr. Clark made it clear that his action was final; and therefore, with great regret, yet with sympathy and understanding his resignation was accepted.⁴⁹²

Clark would pass the torch of the presidency to Daniel Alfred Poling. Having been involved in Christian Endeavor since he was a young member of the Junior Christian Endeavorers, Poling had personally known Clark for over fifteen years. Clark had been grooming Poling to take these responsibilities and was glad to have a capable successor.

Clark did not step away from Christian Endeavor completely. “It should be said that Dr. Clark remains president of the World’s Union of Christian Endeavor, and will continue to direct the work of Christian Endeavor in foreign lands; and his influence and counsel will, of course, be available to the movement as long as he lives.”⁴⁹³ He continued to write about Christian Endeavor and specifically focused on the global movement until his death. Clark finished well remaining a humble inspiration to those interested in reaching young people for Christ and for the church.

Effectiveness

What then is the scope of this movement? What is the impact of this society started in a local church, shared by the “traveling missionaries” of Clark’s writings, dispersed by Clark’s global travels and unified by his organization?

⁴⁹² Ibid., 57.

⁴⁹³ Ibid., 58.

To sum up the heartbeat and effectiveness of Christian Endeavor, W. Knight Chaplin writes in his biography of Clark: “The great contribution which Christian Endeavor has made to the religious life of this generation has been the development of the personal responsibility of the young people for their share of the work and worship of the Church. Thus has it developed men and women and organizations that have borne the good fruit.”⁴⁹⁴ And again: “Christian Endeavor at its best is a great educator because it inaugurates a leading-out process of the religious life of young people. It discovers a young person to himself as well as to others. It shows him that he has a tongue to be used in speaking of Jesus, and hands to be used in working for Him, and feet for running His errands, and, above all, a heart for loving Him supremely.”⁴⁹⁵ Chris Coble in his dissertation, *Where Have All the Young People Gone: The Christian Endeavor Movement and the Training of Protestant Youth*, states, “At its most fundamental level, Christian Endeavor successfully transmitted to three generations of youth a Protestant style of piety and, in the process, fulfilled the key task of religious education.”⁴⁹⁶ The mark of Christian Endeavor was lasting and deep. But the overall scope is probably best shared by Clark himself at the 26th convention:

At least ten million former members are now active and useful in church-work to a degree far in excess of what would have been their activity without their Christian Endeavor training. There have been at least four million associate members brought to Christ and into church-membership in part through the influence of the society. At least twenty millions of dollars have been given to local church missionary, and charitable objects by Endeavorers. More than fifty millions of young people’s meetings have been held, with an aggregate attendance of at least one billion five hundred millions. At least one hundred thousand union

⁴⁹⁴ Chaplin, *Francis E. Clark : Founder of the Y.P.S.C.E.*, 118.

⁴⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 119–120.

⁴⁹⁶ Coble, “Where Have All the Young People Gone?,” 314.

meetings and conventions representing all evangelical denominations have also been held, with an aggregate attendance of fifty millions, giving a tremendous impetus toward interdenominational fellowship.⁴⁹⁷

Even more than the numbers of people and dollars, was the impact:

But who can reckon in millions or billions the amount of Christly activity in prisons and hospitals, on ships, among the poor, in fresh-air camps, for Sabbath-observance, municipal reform, civic betterment, temperance, social purity, for evangelism, Bible-study, mission-study, systematic giving, and for international peace and arbitration? Who can weigh or measure, or tabulate the religious influence and impulse of these generations of Christian Endeavorers? I have rehearsed them that we may record our gratitude to God, and that we may begin our next generation - get a "running start," as it were, toward our second three and thirty years with new courage, with new purposes, with higher aims for a larger and more substantial advance in all noble-endeavors.⁴⁹⁸

Christian Endeavor has left a lasting impact on the global Protestant church.

This global impact came through the innovation of Francis Clark for his local church and then adapted and promoted by Clark through his writings, his travel and his organization. At its core it valued young people and the role they could play in leading the church. It sought to train up young people for leadership both now and in the future for Christ and the church through responsibility, action and community.

Epilogue

The enormous procession of 15,000 delegates marched up Fifth Avenue to Central Park. As the procession passed by, the crowd of tens of thousands, who had braved the hottest days of the year, cheered them on. The procession and the gathering at the park were part of the Twenty-eighth Convention of the Christian Endeavor Society. Overseeing the convention and the society was the seventy year old, Francis Edward

⁴⁹⁷ *Twenty-Sixth International Christian Endeavor Convention: Held in Fiesta Park, The Temple Beautiful, and in Many Churches, Los Angeles, California, July 9-14, 1913*, 38.

⁴⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

Clark, president and founder. The memories surely flooded down on Clark as he participated in the convention's festivities. A few days before he and a handful of others had returned to Portland, Maine to hold a prayer meeting in the parsonage where Christian Endeavor was begun.⁴⁹⁹ As he observed the representatives from around the world, Clark had to recall the first letters he received from each of the countries telling him of the beginning of their societies, his visits to those places, his friendship with leadership and the impact those societies had in starting the movement in other parts of the world.

While he had no idea when he started what God would bring to this movement, he knew now some of the impact Christian Endeavor had on the church. Always looking to serve the church and to connect young people to Christ and the church, Clark saw this come to fruition around the world. Through his written communication, global travel, and organizational skills, Clark had helped Christian Endeavor change the face of Protestant Christianity's ministry to young people. No longer relegated to the back-pew, no longer seen as "almost adults," no longer waiting to be old enough to serve, young people were now active parts of most church's ministries. Clark had seen the church around the world change so that it now valued young people and saw a place for them in the church and in ministry.

⁴⁹⁹ Clark, *Memories of Many Men in Many Lands; an Autobiography*, 636.

Part 3: Factors for Youth Ministry Today

The third part of this dissertation examines the implications that Clark and his success with Christian Endeavor have for youth ministry and the Church's ministry with young people today. By highlighting some of the differences and similarities between Clark's world and the world of today, a clear call for the church to prize, prepare, propel and promote young people emerges.

Chapter 9: Implications for Today

What about now? Has youth ministry fully embraced and lived into the model set out by Clark and Christian Endeavor? While all youth ministry today traces its roots back to Christian Endeavor, unfortunately it has left behind some of the most important values of Christian Endeavor and therefore has lost its effectiveness. The Protestant church needs to learn from Christian Endeavor, learn to do ministry *with youth*, and prize, prepare, propel and promote its young people for Christ and the church.

In this final chapter I will demonstrate the need for a movement back towards prizing, preparing, propelling and promoting young people by utilizing lessons we learned from Clark and Christian Endeavor; taking a closer look at Scriptural views of

young people, especially the views of Jesus; and reviewing recent theories on youth ministry from Christian Smith, Andrew Root, Kenda Creasy Dean and Fuller Youth Institute (Chap Clark, Kara Powell, and Brad Griffin). First, however, I will do a brief comparison of today's culture with the culture of Clark's day. This will illustrate how some of Clark's principles can be effective today, as well as demonstrate the need for constant adaptation in local ministry.

Youth Culture Today

One of the main areas where culture today is quite different than in Clark's day is the influence and power of the Church. The Church is no longer the dominant cultural force that it was in Clark's day. One illustration of this change is the usage of the media. In Bruce J. Evenson's book, *God's Man for the Gilded Age: D.L. Moody and the Rise of Modern Mass Evangelism*, he points out the ways that a clever church leader, D.L. Moody was able to maximize the press to promote his ideals and events. The circulation numbers of Christian Endeavor's paper, *The Christian Endeavor World*, and the depth of coverage of Christian Endeavor conventions by popular newspapers demonstrates this as well.⁵⁰⁰ The Church had strong influence in Clark's day.

To make one comparison, a large youth convention was held in 2007 in Saint Louis, Missouri (the same town where the 1890 Christian Endeavor was held) with 10,000 people in attendance, mostly high school students. The convention lasted for one week, parts of which were held in over thirty different locations including the Edward Jones Dome, a multi-purpose stadium capable of seating up to 70,000 people. The event

⁵⁰⁰ For more on this see Chapter 6: Written Communication. For an example of the press coverage of Christian Endeavor conventions the New York Times in 1892 devoted entire issues to convention coverage.

included several community service aspects as well. Despite press releases and the city-wide impact, this event received no articles in the local *St. Louis Post Dispatch*.⁵⁰¹ With the Church losing influence in the larger culture, it is challenged to find ways to call upon young people to serve and lead.

In today's culture, the Church has lost a lot of its influence in popular culture. It no longer has the power to draw attention, nor does it hold a place in the broader cultural consciousness.⁵⁰² David Kinnaman in his book, *UnChristian: What A New Generation Really Thinks About Christianity*, reveals from his research that close to 40% of people under the age of 41 are outsiders to Christianity. Compare this to the 25% of the population of those over 41 who are outsiders to Christianity and it becomes clear that the Church is losing its influence.⁵⁰³ Kinnaman's research goes on to show that young people have an increasingly negative view of the Christians they do know (and the church).⁵⁰⁴

In Clark's day, for the first time in the United States people were moving from agricultural areas to the urban centers in order to find work. This move to the city is happening today in more complete ways than Clark saw. According to the World Health

⁵⁰¹ As a member of the coordinating team for the event, Nazarene Youth Conference 2007: Water Fire Wind, I have first-hand statistical information.

⁵⁰² David Kinnaman and Aly Hawkins, *You Lost Me: Why Young Christians Are Leaving Church-- and Rethinking Faith* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: BakerBooks, 2011); George Barna, *Revolution* (Wheaton, Ill.: Tyndale House Publishers, 2005); Dan Kimball, *They Like Jesus but Not the Church: Insights from Emerging Generations* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 2007).

⁵⁰³ David Kinnaman and Gabe Lyons, *UnChristian: What a New Generation Really Thinks About Christianity-- and Why It Matters* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Books, 2007), 18.

⁵⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 28.

Organization as of 2010 more than half of all people in the world live in an urban area.⁵⁰⁵ According to U.S. Census numbers around 5 percent of the United States population lived in cities in 1790. One hundred years later that number had grown to 35 percent.⁵⁰⁶ The trend of people moving to urban centers is projected to continue for the foreseeable future. With the collision of people and cultures in the world's cities, there come different pressures, problems and opportunities. The diversity of young people, from different cultures, religions and backgrounds, in those cities is vast and requires a flexibility that Christian Endeavor seems to have been able to offer in its global impact during Clark's day.

In addition to the collision of people in cities, young people today are experiencing an increase in choices for entertainment and an increase in temptations drawing them away from church. This is a similar issue to what Clark faced with the entertainment options exploding at the end of the 1800's, but the types of temptations are different. A few of the things drawing young people away from commitments (or potential commitments) to the church include busyness, mobile smart phones, increased transportation options, and more autonomy.⁵⁰⁷ This reality creates a connection to Christian Endeavor's efforts to reclaim young people for the church, but new understandings are required in this different age.

⁵⁰⁵ "WHO | Urban Population Growth," *WHO*, accessed March 5, 2014, http://www.who.int/gho/urban_health/situation_trends/urban_population_growth_text/en/.

⁵⁰⁶ "Increasing Urbanization: Population Distribution by City Size, 1790 to 1890," July 19, 2012, <http://www.census.gov/dataviz/visualizations/005/>.

⁵⁰⁷ Chap Clark, *Hurt 2.0 : Inside the World of Today's Teenagers* (Baker Academic, 2011); Sherry Turkle, *Alone Together: Why We Expect More from Technology and Less from Each Other* (New York: Basic

One other area of today's culture that bears highlighting in contrast to Clark's day is the lack of connectedness of young people to other generations. Several studies record the deterioration in mental and behavioral health of young people in today's world. One of the significant factors identified leading to these issues is a lack of connection between young people and different generations, especially adults.⁵⁰⁸

The Church is called to dive into this diverse world of today. While the world is not the same, there are several places where the principles of Clark in founding and growing the Christian Endeavor society can be utilized today. The call today, as it was for Clark, is for the church to prize, prepare, propel and promote young people today.

Prizing Youth

With so many churches in the world with a specific youth ministry, it may seem odd to argue that one of the needs of the church is to prize youth. However, having a ministry *to* youth is not the same as valuing. Prizing youth means creating an environment that values God at work in young people and the capability of young people.

Age specific ministry to youth

Youth ministry has been adopted by most churches and has been professionalized. There are youth ministry education programs in both undergraduate and graduate levels of Christian higher education. There are youth ministry books, journals, conferences,

Books, 2011); Commission on Children at Risk et al., *Hardwired to Connect: The New Scientific Case for Authoritative Communities* (New York: Institute for American Values, 2003).

⁵⁰⁸ Clark, *Hurt 2.0*; Commission on Children at Risk et al., *Hardwired to Connect*; Kenda Creasy Dean, *Almost Christian : What the Faith of Our Teenagers Is Telling the American Church* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2010).

parachurch agencies, and denominational leaders. The church, Protestant, Roman Catholic, and Eastern Orthodox, has made room for ministry to youth. This can be directly attributed to Francis Clark and Christian Endeavor.

Before Clark, there was very little focus on youth in the church aside from patiently observing ministry until they reached “adulthood” or the occasional temporary prayer meeting. The Sunday school, which had once been focused primarily on young people, had been brought into the church and its focus transitioned to the younger children of the church. Churches were not willing to allow young people under eighteen years old into church membership and therefore were very hesitant to allow them to serve. When young people were the focus of the church’s attention, usually during revival meetings, there were the occasional “bubbling up” of young people’s prayer meetings, but almost none of those were sustainable nor did they move youth to action and serving. Instead most efforts to involve young people in church included attempts at entertainment and to move the attention away from serving and sacrifice. Those attempts failed in producing disciples and in maintaining attendance.

Francis Clark, a young pastor in Portland, Maine, was trying to find ways to engage the young people of his community. When he recognized the problem that the church offered almost nothing for young people after Sunday School age and before the age of church membership, he adapted, synthesized and added on to some approaches he had discovered from Theodore Cuyler and Horace Bushnell. On a cold and snowy night in February, 1881, Clark invited a group of sixty young people to join a society with high responsibility, involvement and accountability. The first Young People’s Society of

Christian Endeavor was born and it changed the church forever with its focus on training and involving young people in ministry.

After Christian Endeavor was born and modeled a successful way of reaching and training young people, churches began to adopt Christian Endeavor or “borrow” the idea. Denominations in particular liked the idea so much that they eventually took the principle of having an age specific ministry to young people and adapted it to their denominations. In so doing they created an avenue to propagate denominational literature and curriculum that communicated the importance of denominational values. This started with a few denominations at first, but gradually grew until by the middle of the 20th century, almost all denominations had their own youth ministry literature and curriculum as well as denominational leaders to guide local churches in this ministry to youth.⁵⁰⁹ The move to denominational youth ministries carried with it a focus on protection.⁵¹⁰ After the First World War ended in 1918 the temptations and entertainments of American society multiplied. The denominational youth societies were focused on preparing young people for church membership and for appropriate living. The emphasis on ministry to youth expanded into the 1940’s and 1950’s and specific ministers were brought in to be youth pastors or youth directors. The main job of these individuals was (and largely is) to coordinate the ministry to youth in this protective way.

Words build worlds. The language of “ministry TO youth” communicates that the youth are not active leaders in the ministry, but rather are consumers. In this world, youth ministry in a church is something the adults do to youth. It is not something that is done

⁵⁰⁹ Senter, *When God Shows Up: A History of Protestant Youth Ministry in America*.

⁵¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 170.

with them. This model of youth ministry moves away from Christian Endeavor and the foundational principle that Clark instilled: training.

This shift from ministry *with* youth to ministry *to* youth reveals: 1) a decrease in the value placed on the capability of young people; and therefore 2) a decrease in the opportunities for youth to *do* ministry. As mentioned above, Clark valued young people and saw them as capable of significant ministry. He did not see them as full-fledged adults in terms of development, but he did expect them to be able to practice their faith in meaningful ways.

Chap Clark, chair and professor of the Youth, Family, and Culture department at Fuller Theological Seminary, in his ethnographic book, *Hurt 2.0: Inside the World of Today's Teenagers*, argues that adolescents have been abandoned by the adults and parents around them. Chap Clark points out that busyness and programs do not equate to caring and valuing young people. "Even with the best of intentions, the way we raise, train, and even parent our children today exhibits attitudes and behaviors that are simply subtle forms of parental abandonment."⁵¹¹ The systemic abandonment that Chap Clark points to highlights the need to move from offering a place for youth to be, and towards a ministry that prizes, prepares, propels and promotes them for the sake of the Kingdom.

Clark realized that young people who were not engaged in serving the church were highly likely to not own their faith. In Clark's day the number of temptations for attention was growing rapidly. The competition for young people was real. The same is true today. Young people have more things competing for their limited time than ever. If we

⁵¹¹ Clark, *Hurt 2.0*, 31.

continue to abandon our young people, to attempt to do ministry to and for our teenagers, then we will also see the loss of young people in our churches and in the Christian faith.

Valuing God at work in young people

There are no age limits on people God chooses to use and work through. Part of the role of the community of faith is to value young people and God's work among them. One of Clark's foundational beliefs was that young people were important to God and to the church. Scripture and the current youth ministry theory of Andrew Root will be examined here as strong support for the church valuing young people.

In Scripture there are almost no stated age limits on serving God and others. In the Old Testament there are only two age restrictions: twenty years old and twenty-five years old. According to Old Testament law at twenty years old men are counted in the census, have increased tax rates, can be conscripted for military service and are required to make offering to God. The other age limit listed is twenty-five and it is listed only in Numbers 8:24, "This applies to the Levites; from twenty-five years old and upward they shall begin to do duty in the service of the tent of the meeting" (NRSV). In the New Testament there are no age restrictions specifically listed, although some are implied by context as will be demonstrated later. None of the restrictions have to do with God's work in their lives.

In addition to few listed age restrictions, Scripture is clear to point out a number of times and places where God works through young people.⁵¹² From David being anointed

⁵¹² Francis Clark utilized these Scriptures often when advocating for the involvement of Christian Endeavor in the church. See especially, Francis E. Clark, *Training the Church of the Future; Auburn Seminary Lectures on Christian Nurture with Special Reference to the Young People's Society of Christian Endeavor as a Training-school of the Church*.

king and killing Goliath, to Daniel's stand and leadership, to Mary's mothering Jesus; Scripture is full of examples of God at work in young people. It is important to also note that the work of God in young people is not just for the good of other young people, but rather for the good of world! Paul states in his instructions "To Timothy, my loyal child in the faith..." (1 Timothy 1:2), "Let no despise your youth, but set the believers an example in speech and conduct, in love, in faith, in purity" (1 Timothy 4:12 NRSV). God seems willing to work with all people, no matter their age.

Andrew Root's contemporary book, *Revisiting Relational Youth Ministry*, does an excellent job of arguing for valuing young people. Root shows that most current youth ministry models are based on influence. That is, most youth ministries' main goal is to influence young people to behave in ways that the church deems appropriate. He concludes that when the goal is influence, young people become a commodity rather than being valued as individual persons who are made in the image of God. Using Bonhoeffer as a guide, Root contrasts the goal of influence with the goal of incarnation.⁵¹³ Incarnational theology demands that we value young people (and all people) and our relationship with them as the end goal in itself, not as a means to influence. It is in relationship, valuing people for who they are and being willing to journey through life with them, that we find Christ in our midst.

Root's book provided a much needed focus to valuing people in youth ministry. Francis Clark also shared a high view of young people and the role of relationships with them. Root's efforts to refocus the church and youth ministry on valuing young people echoes one of the foundational principles of Clark and Christian Endeavor.

⁵¹³ Andrew Root, *Revisiting Relational Youth Ministry : from a Strategy of Influence to a Theology of Incarnation* (Downers Grove, Ill.: IVP Books, 2007).

However, Root's value on relationships above all else challenges Clark's focus on engaging and training young people. It is clear that a large part of Clark's impetus for engaging young people was his concern for changing their behaviors in the world.⁵¹⁴ Root seems to challenge Clark's emphasis on busyness and service by refocusing the conversation on engaging adults in significant relationship with young people. It cannot be ignored that the cultural context of Clark's day included more significant familial relationships and influence than the "abandoned" culture of today in which Root writes. Significantly both Clark and Root challenged the church to prize young people in ways they currently were not.

The church needs to learn from this posture of prizing God's work in young people. The call here at a minimum seems to be to value the reality that God can and does work in and through young people. Churches need to regularly give space to listen to youth and to be a part of helping them hear God at work in their lives (for example Samuel and Eli).

Valuing the Capability of Young People

In addition to recognizing that God is at work in the lives of young people, the church needs to realize that young people are capable. Capability has to do with the power, ability and capacity to do something. Developmental experts and the largest ever study of youth and religion both are indicating that young people are capable of significant faith, serving and leading.

⁵¹⁴ Francis E. Clark, *Danger Signals the Enemies of Youth, from the Business Man's Standpoint (containing Advice to the Young on the Evils of the Day from Many Merchants of Boston)* (Boston: Lee & Shepard, 1885); Francis E. Clark, *Looking Out on Life a Book for Girls on Practical Subjects Based on Many Letters from Wise Mothers* (Boston: D. Lothrop, 1892); Francis E. Clark, *Our Business Boys (what Eighty-three Business Men Say)* (Boston: D. Lothrop, 1884).

Developmental experts have argued for some time about the physiological realities of adolescence versus the cultural creation of adolescent culture. Utilizing some of the most recent biological and psychological research, Robert Epstein, former editor-in-chief of *Psychology Today*, argues that young people are capable thinkers, can love, are tough, are creative and can handle responsibility.⁵¹⁵ Epstein draws on many studies from psychological, to developmental, to physiological to support his claims. Epstein partnered with Diane Dumas to construct a list of things that make people adult and then created the *Epstein-Dumas Test of Adulthood* and administered it to a large group (over thirty-thousand participants). The results revealed that there was not much of a difference between teens and adults in their “adulthood”.⁵¹⁶ In short, Epstein argues that most young people are as adult as “adults” in terms of capability. Teenagers are lacking the experience adults have, but are not lacking the capability.

The National Study of Youth and Religion also demonstrates that young people are capable of great faith. According to the study, eight percent of all young people are considered “highly devoted”; that is they “believe in God, attend religious services weekly or more often, for whom faith is extremely important in their lives, who regularly participate in religious youth groups and who pray and read the Bible regularly.”⁵¹⁷ In addition to noting that there are young people who are highly devoted, the study

⁵¹⁵ Robert Epstein, *Teen 2.0: What Every Parent, Educator, and Student Needs to Know About Ending Teen Turmoil* (Fresno, Calif.: Quill Driver Books/Word Dancer Press, 2010).

⁵¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 147–157. The list of categories includes: love, sex, leadership, problem solving, physical abilities, verbal and math skills, interpersonal skills, handling responsibility, managing high-risk behavior, managing work and money, education, personal care, self-management, and citizenship. The text can be taken at <http://howadultareyou.com>.

⁵¹⁷ Christian Smith and Melinda Lundquist Denton, *Soul Searching: the Religious and Spiritual Lives of American Teenagers* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 110.

identified factors significantly associated with this level of faith. Relating to the capability of young people, one thing stands out: none of the factors identified have to do with capacity.⁵¹⁸ That is to say that none of the factors identified would indicate that only certain levels of intelligence are capable of this level of high devotion. Put in another way, it seems that capacity and capability are not the factors keeping young people from this level of devotion.

The problem is not the capability of most young people, but rather the lack of opportunities and encouragement to try out their ideas. If the church can begin to value young people not as some sort of “alien species”, but as less-experienced Christians,⁵¹⁹ then part of the role of the church changes to be a place where opportunities are given to experience ministry from a young age. This change in value attributed to youth has to start in the leadership of the youth ministry, extend to the pastoral staff, and then into the lay leadership. When a church starts seeing young people as valuable and capable, it changes the way the whole organization treats them and the opportunities presented.

Upon embracing this shift in valuing young people as capable contributors, the first activity that Clark empowered young people to lead was a prayer meeting. Churches today could adopt this as well. In addition to providing a multitude of opportunities for young people to lead, this kind of meeting gives space for young people to openly proclaim their faith. Even if local ministries embraced this type of prayer meeting as part of their weekly activities it values the capability of young people and the work of God in their lives.

⁵¹⁸ Ibid., 111.

⁵¹⁹ Dean, *Almost Christian : What the Faith of Our Teenagers Is Telling the American Church*.

From the abandonment issues that Chap Clark mentions to the studies showing that young people are capable, the call for the church moving forward is to value young people as capable contributors to the Kingdom. Francis Clark was adamant in his belief that young people could serve Christ and the church and serve well. If Clark could build a worldwide movement that involved young people in the church and faith, then the church today should share that value.

Preparing Youth

In addition to learning to prize our young people, the church needs to better prepare them. One of the most significant elements of Christian Endeavor, as identified by Clark and others, was its focus on training young people. Jesus also followed a discipleship model of training young people. Through comparing these two models a call back to training will be heard.

Clark's Training

Clark firmly believed that Sunday School had a place in the church for young people. He believed that it did the job of educating young people about Scripture and doctrine. Many youth ministries today continue in this valuable effort of educating young people. The thing that led to the formation of Christian Endeavor, was the need, in Clark's view, for *training*. By "training" Clark meant a place for young people to try out the practice of their faith, learn from their experiences, adapt and continue to practice. This is what we would term "praxis" today. The problem for Clark was that a lot of young people had some knowledge about the Christian faith, but were unable to put it

into practice in their own lives when they were young. Christian Endeavor then was a place not just for ministry *to* the specific age of youth, but rather - and this is most important - a place where young people could *do* the ministry themselves. Clark quickly realized that Christian Endeavor was creating a place where young people's head knowledge and sincere hearts were cemented into life-long faith through action.

Properly understood this began with prayer meetings, where young people would pray together. Here everyone who was an active member was expected to contribute. At a minimum this was just sharing a Scripture verse or a line from a song, but it also often included sharing a faith story or testimony. This training also took shape in the work of the various committees of Christian Endeavor (whose list adapted over the years). In these committees young people themselves would be responsible for evangelism, hospitality, service, worship and discipleship. In this way young people would be given many opportunities to lead ministries while they were young. It was no wonder then that when they reached "adulthood" they were not only interested in leadership in the church, but were trained, experienced and ready to step into leadership in ministry (and apparently other facets of life as many Christian Endeavorers found their way into leadership in companies and even the government).

Jesus' Training

Jesus modeled a discipleship of action and participation as well. It becomes clear in Jesus' adult life that he is considered a rabbi. This is highlighted in a number of ways including the fact that many throughout the gospels refer to Him by that title. The term "rabbi" during Jesus' lifetime was informally given to teachers and those with great

wisdom in understanding the Torah.⁵²⁰ The word “rabbi” can be translated as “master” or “teacher”. They were men who had distinguished themselves by their deep desire to study and teach the Torah. Ann Spangler and Lois Tverberg in their book, *Sitting at the Feet of Rabbi Jesus*, note, “Rabbis interpreted the Torah, explained the Scriptures, and told parables.”⁵²¹ Jesus did all of these things as well as calling his own disciples. “Along with instructing the crowds, a rabbi’s greatest goal was to raise up disciples who would carry on his teaching.”⁵²²

In Jesus day the education system for Jews started at the age of five or six. In this first stage of education the children committed to learning the Torah and the prophets. The next stage of education, *Bet Midrash*, would have had the boys learning the oral tradition and the rest of the *Tanakh* (our “Old Testament”).⁵²³ Most boys would participate only in the first stage of education and then go home and learn their father’s trade. Those who were bright and had done well in their studies could advance to *Bet Midrash*. The final stage of education, *Bet Talmud*, was only for a very select few and involved an apprentice relationship with a specific rabbi. This would begin in the mid to late teenage years. “To become a disciple of a respected teacher represented a great honor, so the family and community rallied to help a young man realize his aspiration.”⁵²⁴

⁵²⁰ Brad Young, *Meet the Rabbis: Rabbinic Thought and the Teachings of Jesus* (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson Publishers, 2007), 30–31.

⁵²¹ Ann Spangler and Lois Tverberg, *Sitting at the Feet of Rabbi Jesus: How the Jewishness of Jesus Can Transform Your Faith* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 2009), 27.

⁵²² *Ibid.*, 33.

⁵²³ *Ibid.*, 24–25.

⁵²⁴ Young, *Meet the Rabbis*, 32.

The relationship of a rabbi to his disciples was very important and very intimate. It centered on knowing and living the Torah. “The sage was known as one who could answer a question in any area because he had complete knowledge of the Bible, as well as the Oral Torah. The disciple was known as one who could answer any question relating to his specific area of study in the oral tradition... So while the sage had achieved a mastery understanding of all aspects of Jewish teachings, the disciple would interact with questions connected to his research.”⁵²⁵ The *talmidin*, translated “disciples,” would leave everything in order to learn from the rabbi. “To follow a rabbi... involved a literal kind of following, in which disciples, often traveled with, lived with, and imitated their rabbis, learning not only from what they said but from what they did - from their reactions to everyday life as well as from the manner in which they lived. The task of the disciple was to become as much like the rabbi as possible.”⁵²⁶ This kind of learning relationship is more than just learning the information that the rabbi possessed.

The mission of a rabbi was to become a living example of what it means to apply God’s Word to one’s life. A disciple apprenticed himself to a rabbi because the rabbi had saturated his life with Scripture and had become a true follower of God. The disciple sought to study the text, not only of Scripture but of the rabbi’s life, for it was there that he would learn how to live out the Torah. Even more than acquiring his master’s knowledge, he wanted to acquire his master’s character, his internal grasp of God’s law.⁵²⁷

⁵²⁵ Ibid., 30.

⁵²⁶ Spangler and Tverberg, *Sitting at the Feet of Rabbi Jesus*, 51.

⁵²⁷ Ibid., 34.

The relationship was held together by a deep trust in the rabbi and his commitment to the Torah. The literature of the time tells us that disciples saw their rabbis equal to or even greater than their own fathers.⁵²⁸ If the average age of a disciple when he was first called was in his mid-to-late teens, then the relational investment and apprenticeship takes on even more value. This is a deep level of relationship and commitment.

This brings us back to Jesus and His disciples as we see them in the Gospels. The connections to this style of teaching and learning are fairly apparent. Many believe that Jesus fully lived into this role as a rabbi with disciples. “So often we focus on Jesus’ mission on the cross to save us from our sins. As marvelous as that is, it’s critical for us to grasp the importance of his mission on earth as a rabbi. His goal was to raise up disciples who would become like him.”⁵²⁹ Jesus’ relationship with his twelve disciples seems to follow this pattern. They lived with him, followed him everywhere, listened to his teachings, and seemed intent in learning all they could from Jesus. “Jesus developed a mentoring relationship with his disciples, who learned his teachings by heart and followed his example as apprentices. Jesus’ teaching techniques have deep roots in the rich soils of Jewish education and Torah training.”⁵³⁰

Direct comparisons from the rabbinical Jewish model of discipleship and Jesus’ own ministry show strong connections. Brad Young points out in his book, *Meet the Rabbis*, that at least six similarities can be seen in the way rabbis mentored their disciples and Jesus taught his core group:

⁵²⁸ Young, *Meet the Rabbis*, 31.

⁵²⁹ Spangler and Tverberg, *Sitting at the Feet of Rabbi Jesus*, 34.

⁵³⁰ Young, *Meet the Rabbis*, 29.

1. Jesus gave a radical call to the mentoring relationship for select disciples
2. He demanded that they must memorize his teachings
3. The disciples learned by observation
4. They learned by working alongside Jesus
5. They went on assignment to work alone and then report back what they had done
6. They were accountable to their master's supervision⁵³¹

The disciples of Jesus were the leaders of the early Christian church. Understanding their relationship with Jesus in this context unlocks a fuller understanding of the Gospels and of our call to invest in young people. Jesus' model of apprenticeship demonstrates a commitment to education in action, or as Clark termed it, "training".

Current Research

Without this emphasis on training, the church today is struggling to connect young people to the church in meaningful ways and to Christ. Many studies have shown the problems of retention of young people who were once attending and even active in youth ministry.⁵³² One study has also identified Moralistic Therapeutic Deism as a main culprit for the passivity towards faith and the church in both youth and adults. The guiding beliefs of Moralistic Therapeutic Deism are: 1) A god exists who created and orders the

⁵³¹ Francis E. Clark, *Ways and Means For the Youth People's Society of Christian Endeavor: A Book of Suggestions for the Prayer-meeting, the Committees, and All Lines of Christian Work Adopted by Christian Endeavor Societies*. (Boston: D. Lothrop Company, 1890), 37.

⁵³² Kara E. Powell and Chap Clark, *Sticky Faith: Everyday Ideas to Build Lasting Faith in Your Kids* (Zondervan, 2011); Smith and Denton, *Soul Searching: the Religious and Spiritual Lives of American Teenagers*; George H. Gallup Jr., "The Religiosity Cycle," *The Gallup Poll*, October 2006; Frank Newport, "A Look at Religious Switching in America Today," *The Gallup Poll*, October 2006; "Lifeway Research Uncovers Reasons 18 to 22 Year Olds Drop Out of Church," accessed May 31, 2012, <http://www.lifeway.com/article/165979/>; Barna Group, "Most Twentysomethings Put Christianity On the Shelf Following Spiritually Active Teen Years," *Barna Update*, September 2006.

world and watched over life on earth; 2) God wants people to be good, nice, and fair to each other, as taught in the Bible and by most world religions; 3) The central goal of life is to be happy and to feel good about oneself; 4) God is not involved in my life except when I need God to resolve a problem; 5) Good people go to heaven when they die.⁵³³ In addition to identifying Moralistic Therapeutic Deism as the prevalent belief among young people, the National Study of Youth and Religion also revealed that this was most commonly believed and taught by the adults of the congregations.⁵³⁴ While young people have an abundance of activities to choose from, they have been abandoned by adults and no longer receive the training for faith and life needed.⁵³⁵

Kenda Creasy Dean, building on the results of the National Study of Youth and Religion, argues in her book, *Almost Christian: What the Faith of Our Teenagers is Telling the American Church*, that young people need: training from adults and specifically parents that translates faith in such a way they can own it themselves; to hear faith stories of others and learn to articulate their own; and opportunities to detach from things that distract them from their faith in Jesus.⁵³⁶ Dean's goal for teenagers is that they would be engaged in a sustainable faith that they participate in with other believers of all ages. She argues that the church as a whole, not just a singular level of ministry to youth, is needed for these things to happen. Many of her suggestions Clark would have identified as regular practices in Christian Endeavor.

⁵³³ Smith and Denton, *Soul Searching : the Religious and Spiritual Lives of American Teenagers*; Dean, *Almost Christian : What the Faith of Our Teenagers Is Telling the American Church*.

⁵³⁴ Smith and Denton, *Soul Searching : the Religious and Spiritual Lives of American Teenagers*, 166.

⁵³⁵ Clark, *Hurt 2.0*.

⁵³⁶ Dean, *Almost Christian : What the Faith of Our Teenagers Is Telling the American Church*.

In Christian Endeavor young people learned to articulate their faith and were expected to do so publicly every week. This is one of the main issues that young people today in youth ministries seem to struggle with.⁵³⁷ In Christian Endeavor young people also learned to initiate and follow through in ministry. They saw their work as important contributions to Christ and the life of the church. In addition young people were trained in practices that helped with their devotion.

Clark was not the advocate that Dean is for the involvement of adults in the lives of young people. Perhaps one reason for this absence was because adults had been so involved in young people's activities, like prayer meetings, that the bigger problem was getting them to allow youth to participate. While Clark does not actively engage in requesting more adults involved in young people's lives, as Dean does, he did assume and occasionally articulate that adults were needed to help train the young people. For example, Clark structured Christian Endeavor societies so that the local church pastor would have regular communication and input into the society. He wanted adults to hand over responsibility to young people once they were trained. Whatever the case may be, Clark did not actively pursue adult involvement like Dean. However, Clark does share Dean's passion for connecting young people to the active faith practices and missional activities of the church.

In another recent study by Fuller Youth Institute, one of the significant factors to teenagers developing a "sticky faith" (a faith that "sticks" even after young people graduate youth ministries) was serving younger children. "The high school students we surveyed who served in children's or middle school ministry seemed to have stickier faith

⁵³⁷ Smith and Denton, *Soul Searching : the Religious and Spiritual Lives of American Teenagers*; Dean, *Almost Christian : What the Faith of Our Teenagers Is Telling the American Church*.

in both high school and college.”⁵³⁸ This investment in other youth and children was something that Clark grasped and implemented in Christian Endeavor. Through the work of the committees, young people would step into ministry roles leading other youth in prayer meetings, outreach, hospitality, and pastoral care, to name a few. It is significant here too to mention that more information was not a factor in sticky faith, but rather actively serving and participating in a supportive inter-generational faith community seems to be most important.⁵³⁹

Put in a more direct way when churches settle for only education they are inviting teens to “bank” these faith beliefs away. Banked beliefs are “beliefs that do not fit in with other beliefs. They are remembered or stored away, but do not affect the way a person acts, except perhaps, when there is occasion for those beliefs to be ‘regurgitated’.”⁵⁴⁰ In other words, these are beliefs that are learned and only recalled when the setting is just right. For many youth this seems to be the primary type of belief that our youth groups are perpetuating. Students learn the content of a set of beliefs, and they “bank” them away for use in the next Sunday School lesson or for the next time their parents quiz them on what they are learning at church. The things they “learn” do not influence the way they live their everyday lives. This is to be completely contrasted with “actual beliefs” which are the beliefs that a person holds that influence their behavior and action. Often people do not articulate these out loud (although they can), but understanding their culture and observing their life lived out will tell this tale. The things that young people

⁵³⁸ Powell and Clark, *Sticky Faith*, 98.

⁵³⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁴⁰ Philip Hughes, “The Use of Actual Beliefs in Contextualizing Theology,” *East Asian Journal of Theology* 2, no. 2 (1984): 251–58.

learn are moved from head to heart, from banked beliefs to actual beliefs, when they have the opportunities to try out their faith in action. These experiences, and sometimes these are experiences of failure, are prime opportunities for learning, adapting and trying faith out again. The model of Christian Endeavor put this reality into practice.

Much has been made today of the role of adults in the lives of young people. Christian Endeavor has received criticism throughout its existence from people who were afraid that Christian Endeavor simply worked to isolate youth from the rest of the church. Clark constantly battled this and saw it as a criticism from afar. He believed that when people experienced Christian Endeavor they would see that this was not the case for two reasons: 1) Adults were constantly needed to help support, encourage and train all Christian Endeavor activities; 2) one of the main mottoes of Christian Endeavor was “For Christ and the church”; a constant pledge to loyalty to the local church and her activities. For Clark, Christian Endeavor started with the idea that young people could do church ministry both now and in the future and that following Christ included that expectation. Thus young people would never have seen their work in Christian Endeavor separate from the function of the whole body of the local church. The pastor and other adults were needed to train and encourage, but not to do the ministry for youth or to youth.

The church needs to start with the end in mind. If the goal of the church is to produce disciples who themselves will create disciples, then the church must be willing to prepare young people by moving past information and towards participation and training. This builds on the value of “prizing” young people enough to “prepare” them to serve Christ and the church.

In the world of today teenagers are incredibly busy. They have full schedules with extra-curricular activities, jobs, and homework.⁵⁴¹ Most youth ministries will be glad to have students come twice in one week. How does the church today then prepare young people? Perhaps the way forward is found not in formal training programs that involve a big group on a regular basis, but instead in more individual mentoring relationships where teens and adults from congregations make space for each other as they are able. These individualized relationships are better suited for apprenticeship kinds of conversations. In addition to the one-on-one time outside of regular church meetings, the relationship could also involve the young person serving alongside the adult in regularly scheduled activities. In these ways the training becomes more organic and more individualized. This is ministry *with* youth personified.

Propelling Youth

In addition to prizing and preparing youth, churches need to propel them into the world. When the principles of prizing and preparing are in place, the natural progression into leadership in the world and the church follows. The church needs to send young people into their communities in the same way that Christian Endeavor utilized committees to send young people out from the local church into the community. Christian Endeavor also did a good job “graduating” young people from Christian Endeavor into the church as adults with a sensitivity and passion for young people. The church’s job is to expectantly and supportively send.

⁵⁴¹ This is one of the findings of Clark, *Hurt 2.0*.

Returning to Jesus' model of discipleship is helpful here as well. In addition to the apprenticeship that Jesus' young disciples experienced, they were also challenged to "go". In Matthew 10:5-15 (Mark 6:6b-13; Luke 9:1-6) Jesus sends out his disciples to go and practice what he has been teaching them. The disciples then return and report on what they had done. This demonstrates that Jesus wanted his disciples to practice what they learned.

Jesus also propelled his disciples onward at the end of his earthly ministry in what is known as the Great Commission passages (Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-18; Luke 24:44-49; John 20:19-22; Acts 1:8). In these passages directed to his young disciples, Jesus expressed full confidence in their abilities to serve the church and the world despite what some might consider their young ages. The call was to "go, make disciples" in the same manner Jesus had made them disciples. The disciples would have had a sensitivity and passion towards young people.

The genius of Christian Endeavor was that it put youth into places of leadership in the church while still surrounding them with a structure in which they could fail, learn, adapt and try again. Youth ministry needs to change, just as Clark did, away from things that would only entertain youth, away from ministry *to* youth, and towards expecting youth to be active contributors to the encouragement of believers and the ministry. This is a decidedly active move away from the protective model of youth ministry. This is a movement toward handing youth ministry back over to youth. Timothy Eldred, the current president of Christian Endeavor International, is fond of saying that "youth ministry" is an interesting word choice for describing this ministry. Many other ministries for specific groups are given possessive names where the people involved in each group

will be doing that group's ministry (e.g. "men doing men's ministry, women doing women's ministry, etc.). But for youth, we do not call it youth's ministry. Perhaps we should. Handing youth ministry, and the theology behind it, back to young people would be a great example of embracing the Christian Endeavor spirit.

In Christian Endeavor the compact organizational model allowed for a lot of adult oversight and supervision, while empowering the young people to do ministry and to innovate new methods. There is great power in this kind of flexibility. If local churches held to the idea of propelling young people into their communities, but allowed young people to innovate ways to do this, then there is no limit to the options. The kinds and types of committees of Christian Endeavor were famously adaptable to their local needs. By adopting the principle of propelling young people into their worlds, but not prescribing a method, churches could see young people again sent as missionaries into their schools, social networks and communities.

Promoting Youth

In addition to prizing, preparing and propelling youth, the church needs to become the world's biggest promoters of youth. Media depictions of young people typically trend toward the extreme, often highlighting their bad behavior and strange ways. If the church truly prizes young people, is willing to prepare them for ministry now, is propelling them out into the world, then should not the church be promoting these young people as well?

Francis Clark was Christian Endeavor's biggest fan and advocate. He tirelessly wrote about Christian Endeavor in books and articles as evidenced by his over forty three different books and articles on Christian Endeavor. In addition he wrote many articles

and editorials over the years in the Christian Endeavor paper. Part of the success of Christian Endeavor and, as shown above, a large part of the spread of Christian Endeavor was due to Clark's promotion of Christian Endeavor and young people. When given an audience for either his pen or his voice, Clark would launch into stories about the young people he had encountered the world over making a difference for Christ and the church through Christian Endeavor.

In addition to being vocal, in person and in print, Clark would travel the world to promote Christian Endeavor and its values. He was referred to as "the most traveled man in the world", because of his non-stop journeys around the United States and the world to encourage and advocate for young people in the church. Clark, travelling at his own expense, would meet with churches, community leaders and anyone else who would listen to advance the belief in young people.

Clark also worked hard to organize the efforts of Christian Endeavor in order to maximize the voice of young people around the world. Clark's organizational and administrative abilities helped him lead an organization from one society with sixty people to a global organization with over five million members. Clark's goal in organizing young people and gathering them for conventions was to encourage them and to promote young people's work in the church to the world. His work in many ways helped the world see that this was possible.

The church needs to learn from Clark's unrelenting promotion of young people. In today's media rich and socially networked environment, everyone has access to an audience. All of the Church should learn to become advocates for youth and their ministry. It is doubtful, in the media saturated context of today's global world that any

single person could have the impact through speaking or writing that Clark did then.

Even though Clark was a prolific writer, his “silent missionaries” would take up to six months to reach their audience. Today’s technology allows for almost immediate reception. A significant push from churches prizing, preparing, and propelling youth could create a significant impact in people’s perceptions of young people (including the Church). If the church began to see its advocacy of young people as one of its roles in the world, the many voices could have a larger impact than Clark did by himself.

Changing the perceptions of the larger population towards young people is a major and important task. Mike Males in his book, *Framing Youth: 10 Myths About t the Next Generation*, highlights the myths that the media and government officials often present concerning young people. The myths span the spectrum from the prevalence of violence, to increases in alcohol and drug abuse, to high percentages of teenage pregnancies. Using comprehensive research, Males points to studies that paint a different picture of young people than often portrayed in the media.⁵⁴² What this book demonstrates is the wide-spread misunderstanding of young people in the United States including by those in the church. If the church could become a place that promotes young people then perceptions towards young people could change.

Promoting young people today makes for an even better future for the Church and young people’s activity in it. If promoting young people today could change the perceptions of many churches, then the adaptations of ministry *with* youth tomorrow would follow.

⁵⁴² Mike A Males, *Framing Youth: Ten Myths About the Next Generation* (Monroe, Me: Common Courage Press, 1998).

For Christ and the Church

The world is and has always been a complex place where people, cultures and faiths intersect and influence one another. The continued challenge for the Church is to live out its beliefs about God – its theology – in ways that are faithful to its past and are sustainable in the world – its context. This conversation between theologies of the past and the present context is known as “contextual theology”.⁵⁴³ This process of helping people learn about the Christian story and connecting it to the current world is a challenging one.

However, by engaging young people in the process of listening to culture, analyzing the themes of culture and discerning where God is already at work, the church lives into a prizing, preparing, propelling and promoting that is currently needed.⁵⁴⁴ Just as Christian Endeavor saw the need for pastors and other adults to walk alongside youth in the process, so too could the church today invest in young people in this process. By organizing youth ministry in a way that involves young people in the ministry, the church would learn to listen to youth and engage them in the process of reading culture.

As demonstrated above, the world of Clark’s day and the world of today, while different, are both complex and rapidly changing places full of global diversity. The Church as it is interested in young people must be willing to embrace and prompt this conversation in all of its diverse local contexts. By believing young people are capable of such a conversation, the local church values their participation in the global church, teaches them to continue to have the conversation, and engages them in the faithful

⁵⁴³ Stephen B. Bevans, *Models of Contextual Theology* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 2002), 5.

⁵⁴⁴ Robert J. Schreiter, *Constructing Local Theologies* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1985). Schreiter demonstrates a variety of ways to listen to culture and discern where God is at work.

response. Contextual theology is needed more than ever in today's ministry with young people.

The purpose of prizing, preparing, propelling, and promoting youth is not to be lost. It is important that the focus of these efforts remain “for Christ and the Church,” as Clark implemented as a motto of Christian Endeavor. In keeping the focus on Christ and the Church these actions value the larger community of which young people are a part: the local, global, historic and future Church community.⁵⁴⁵

It values our local community in that it seeks to understand the local places and their unique and ever changing cultures. It gives voice to each of them as God reveals himself to them in their daily lives as they share experiences together, adapt and innovate and make meaning of their lives. In Clark's time local communities were given freedom to adapt the types of Christian Endeavor societies and the types of committees to meet the needs of its context. The various types of societies are great examples of this. There were Junior societies, Floating societies, Prison societies, Soldier societies, Nurse societies and Railroad societies to name a few.⁵⁴⁶ All of these adaptations came not out of Clark's mind or a central office, but rather from local contexts that were attempting to teach the theologies of the past to a specific context in ways that would connect people to the Christ and the Church.

It values the global community as it seeks to hear from those who around the world also experience God's revelation. It seeks to understand the impact of the decisions

⁵⁴⁵ The four-fold idea of community is original to me as best I can discover. I first used it in a chapter I was asked to write for a book that was never published and have been refining it ever since.

⁵⁴⁶ Clark, *Training the Church of the Future; Auburn Seminary Lectures on Christian Nurture with Special Reference to the Young People's Society of Christian Endeavor as a Training-school of the Church.*

made by each local community on the universal body of Christ. It understands and values the ripple of waves created by each local community around the world as they make decisions on how to best live like Christ in their context. It seeks out the voices of others for accountability, mutual fellowship and consistency in pointing to Christ.

It values the historic community in that it invites the theologies of the past to have voice into our current local struggles and issues. It values Scripture as one of these historic voices. It values the traditions that we build upon and the men and women on whose shoulders we stand in our interpretations of Scripture and of God's work in the world.

It also values the future community in that it seeks to leave a legacy that is full of integrity and fidelity. It seeks to leave behind a sustainable way of living and interacting with God. It values the impact of the young now, and it seeks to give voice to them even when they are still finding it themselves.

Francis Clark was a contextual theologian par excellence without ever knowing the term. He masterfully blended the four-fold voices of the Christian community into an organization that listened to the local context, reminded people of the global work of God, referenced the historic voices that could give wisdom and insight and valued the future community and its contribution to the present Christian impact on the world. By keeping with the actions of prizing, preparing, propelling and promoting young people, the Church today would also blend the four-fold voices of the Christian community together.

Many things can be learned and adapted from Francis Clark and Christian Endeavor. As recent youth ministry research indicates, many of Clark's principles are needed once

again for the church to awaken young people to active participation in the mission of the church. As the attitude of the church changes towards young people so too will her actions. If we allow the past to speak into the future, the church will adapt its current ministry *to* youth into a ministry *with* youth. This kind of ministry begins by prizing God's work in and through the lives of capable young people. The church then will work hard to prepare young people as disciples of Christ, called to engage in ministry now and in the future. The church will naturally propel these young people into the world for Christ and the church. Finally the church will seek to promote youth and ministry with youth to the world around them.

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